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ABSTRACT

This bulletin reports on condensations of tape-recorded lectures and discussions from a workshop which trained a nucleus of Baltimore City Public School personnel in new approaches to the study of the English language. Designed to serve as an orientation, it is made up of six major sections: (1) Charlton Laird discusses the history, nature, and function of language, (2) Robert DiPietro explains the traditional, structural, and transformational approaches to the analysis, study, and teaching of language, (3) Roger Shuy shows the causes of dialect differences and demonstrates how "good" or "bad" usage is effected by historical, psychological, and sociological principles, (4) William Stewart discusses the historical, sociological, and foreign language influences which congribute to the shaping of systems of nonstandard speech, (5) Rosemary Wilson describes the benefits of a reading program based on linguistic principles, and (6) Edgar Schuster offers a structural grammar lesson on modification of nouns. A list of references for language and linguistics is also included. (DD)

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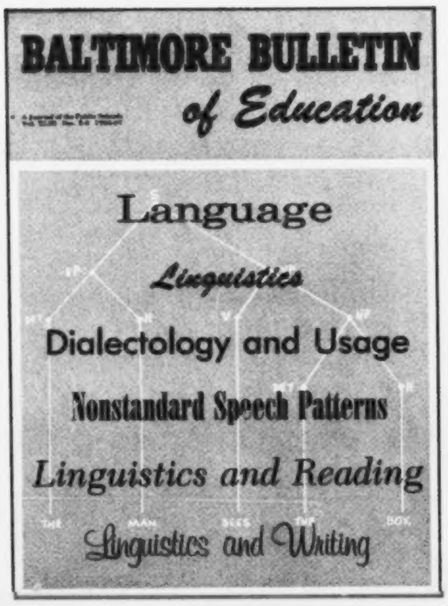

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of Education

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Dialectology and Usage
Nonstandard Speech Patterns
Linguistics and Reading
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Foreword

For several years the supervisory staff of the Secondary English Department has been exploring linguistic approaches to the study of the American English Language. This study has been pursued through hearing information-giving lectures by out-of-state consultants, reading of selected references and follow-up discussion in English departmental meetings, attendance at institutes conducted by regional colleges and universities, and participation of some staff members in the preconvention workshops conducted by the National Council of Teachers of English in connection with national conventions.

From this intensive study, the supervisory staff under the chairmanship of Milton Velder projected a series of workshops for the Baltimore City Public Schools. This series was planned in three phases, the first partially financed with ESEA funds and the third entirely financed with ESEA funds.

Mr. Velder, with the cooperation of L. Earl Wellemeyer, Josie C. Smith, Charles L. Allen, Elsa R. Graser, Jean B. Owens, and Virginia P. Redd, set up these purposes for the workshops:

> Phase I (summer 1966) to train a nucleus of informed personnel in the new approaches to the study of the English language so that they may serve as leaders for future regional city-wide workshops.
>
> Phase II (school year 1966-1967) to study in depth the topics presented in the first phase and to prepare materials for the third phase.
>
> Phase III (school year 1967-1968) to conduct city-wide workshops on a regional basis open to all elementary school teachers and secondary English teachers. Each regional workshop to be headed by members of the English supervisory staff and by teachers selected from participants in Phase I Workshop.

This Bulletin reports condensations of tape-recorded lectures and discussions in the Phase I Workshop. Vincent D. Malin and John J. Schreiber of the Bureau of Publications attended the sessions, tape recorded the lectures and discussions, and prepared the condensation.

Mr. Malin and Mr. Schreiber read the transcriptions, made by the secretarial staff in the Bureau of Publications, and drafted the condensation along the lines planned by the editor with Mr. Velder and Dr. Graser and the staff in the Bureau of Publications.

Mr. Velder and Dr. Graser read the condensations, as well as the transcriptions, and assisted in determining how fully the lectures would be reported.

Each lecturer retains copyright privileges for the material which appears in this Bulletin.

The Bulletin is offered to the Baltimore City Public School staff and to the profession as a useful orientation to the topic "Linguistic Approach to the Study of the American Language."

ANGELA M. BROENING, *Editor*

Language

"Here we are with language which we have devised and yet we do not understand the thing," Dr. Laird said at the outset of the Linguistics Workshop, and then he promptly demonstrated that he has a thorough knowledge and understanding of "the thing." Dr. Laird gives us an intriguing picture of Language as it has developed from Chaucer to Chomsky, from Sanskrit to Pennsylvania Dutch, and from primitive symbols to the Oxford English Dictionary.

CHARLTON LAIRD

I have been asked to tell you what is language. We are dealing here with one of the mysteries of the world. Here we are with language which we have devised and yet we do not understand the thing. We do not know where it came from and we do not know what it is. We come close to knowing what it is. We do know something of how it works.

Language is a mystery in which for a long time we had very little interest. As far as we can tell, earlier, relatively primitive people just ignored it. They used language but they asked no more about it than they did about something like walking and eating. It was something one soon decided to do and the ability to do so was just assumed to be there. In fact, in many quarters it was firmly believed that language was always there. You'll remember God and Adam are supposed to have started using language at once, discussing relatively difficult subjects the first day.

Mystery of the Mind

One reason we don't know how language works is that language is the product of the mind and we don't know how minds work. Neurologists insist that minds work as a result of an almost infinite number of binary choices, that is, the only thing the mind can do is to say "yes" or "no." Apparently, our minds work like a computer but they deal with such great bodies of materials so rapidly that comprehending what the mind is doing as it deals with an unbelievable number of binary choices is incomprehensible. A computer has tanks of knowledge stored in tapes and drums and when it is asked a question, it just assembles this body of knowledge and gives its answer on the basis of that body of knowledge. Our minds apparently work in

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This condensation was made by Vincent D. Malin of the Bureau of Publications of a tape recording of Dr. Laird's presentation to the Linguistic Workshop conducted by the Baltimore City Public Schools, August 8-26, 1966. Dr. Laird retains the copyright on this material and has given the Bureau of Publications permission to print this condensation in the *Baltimore Bulletin of Education.*

very much this way. They have stored up results so that when there is a decision to be made, they don't say, "Well, now, in light of everything, considering the possibilities of the future, I would think this might be good" — they can't do that at all; they say "yes," "no" — that's all they can do. When I speak it's simply the result of an inconceivably large number of "yes" answers. Something in the brain is being asked to do something and it's saying "yes" or I couldn't speak to you. That is the pattern — the way the mind works.

That's what language has to be somehow — an amazingly complex collection of "yes's" and "no's." It is obvious why children don't learn to talk any sooner than they do. They have to build up a body of material out of which they can get "yes" or "no" answers, and obviously some things are easier to get "yes" and "no" answers to than others. And while the children are learning these things, they are building up their tanks of knowledge that can be drawn upon and be concatenated.

We seem to be the kind of creatures to which language is native. And as we can't have language without human beings, we couldn't have human beings without language — we weren't human beings until we had language. Presumably it was so much fun being human that we just had to become human and learn how to use language at the same time. This is the best guess we have as yet, that this kind of stuff, this capacity and need, is in us.

Language as Symbol

We are, for better or worse, in the middle of a population explosion and a knowledge explosion and both of them demand that we have more ability to use our brains and more ability to communicate with other brains. The principal instrument for both of those is language, and not only is it the means of communication most people use for the most vital purposes, it is also the best device to promote thinking that man has ever found. Language works with symbols, and communication apparently has to work with symbols.

All of the arts use symbols. A dancer comes out and puts one hand up in the air; this is some kind of symbol although one may not know what it is a symbol of. This is not a very precise symbol but it's still a symbol. I can go on to the mathematicians who can think in mathematical symbols. I have a friend, a composer, who, I believe, can actually think in tone. Tones are symbols sufficiently precise for him so that his mind can work directly with them.

But the largest body of relatively precise symbols — and there is no other group even close — is the symbol or the symbols that make up the language. And apparently this is true not only of our society but of all societies.

Our job as English teachers then is to help people use this means of communication, this means of thinking. I said that language seems to rest upon symbol. Susanne K. Langer in an exciting little book called *Philosophy in a New Key*[1] suggests that apparently our culture came to be because of a symbol, and that at the root of what makes us human lies language, because language is the most potent body of symbols. She thinks of language not as sound but as something that happens in people. Surely, we can recognize this as true. Machines can speak, devise words, and make them into sentences, but someplace in the process human beings have to be involved. Language has to have thought at both ends. It has to start in thinking and it has to end in thinking and it isn't really language working until at least two brains are involved.

We don't know what happens when people learn, but it is obvious that human minds somehow are of such a nature that they need language, they devise language, and they go on acquiring language and producing it. And one doesn't wonder that this is a tremendous job that the child faces; he doesn't know he faces it, but gradually he is absorbing the concepts of learning what language is good for, how to use it, and even how it works. In a relatively few months, a child has acquired a few words. In a few years, he knows all the most important aspects of the grammatical system. In a few years the child has learned the essence of how the language works and learned this without being told. He has unconsciously signed a sociolinguistic contract in which he has agreed to use words as counters and an integrated system, that is, in a manner which has already been accepted by the rest of his society.

This is a pretty complicated business, then, and it is not surprising that it takes the child some time to acquire quite a lot of vocabulary as well as acquiring ways of using it. There is another impediment. One reason a child can't learn to read and to speak any sooner than he does is that he has to get control of one of the most agile and difficult muscles in his body.

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[1] Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (New York: Mentor Books, The New American Library, 1962).

Control of the Tongue

It takes a long while to develop sharp control of even the most blundering of our muscles. And if there is a more difficult muscle to control than the tongue, either physically or psychologically, I wouldn't know what it is. Language works most of the time through sound and thus it has to be thought of as sound and linguistic phenomena. Language comes into being as a disturbed stream of air, and one of the disturbing agents in this stream of air is the tongue. What the tongue can do is utterly staggering. It has to do it, of course, quite unconsciously. You can't talk very much or you can't work very well if you have to be telling your tongue specifically what to do. The child has to learn to control this extremely difficult muscle.

We have discovered that most languages that are extant are related to some other language. The concept of language families had to be developed because we haven't been able to trace the ancestry of any working languages back to a first language, whatever it was. All languages that we know work with linguistic units although some languages, rather than either words or sentences, have what are called syllables or syllable clusters. These have value only when they are used in relationship to something else and when some way is known to get them into relationship.

Every language has some kinds of linguistic units, and all languages that we know also have ways of handling them so that they can do more than they could by themselves. The first of these ways is what we call vocabulary, the inventory of syllable clusters, and the other, of course, is grammar, the way language works.

Sample of Language

We want to talk about English as language. We often talk about language as etiquette; I suppose this is the way language is talked about most of the time. When people get angry about what youngsters are doing and not doing, it's because they haven't done just what that person thinks they should do. We talk about language as correct conduct. We certainly talk about language as communication. And we think of English not as language, but as *a* language. English is a language and it can be studied as a language, but it can also be studied as a sample of the nature of language.

To discuss the growth in semantics, the growth of meaning, and the shift in meanings requires some background statements about the language as a whole. It may be difficult to define a word, to say what it is, but it is obvious that we have inherited some meaning and a body of meaning (if you'll allow me to say we have something I previously said didn't exist), a body of association, and we've inherited also a body of sound. Any of you who have studied English in an earlier form, Old English or Middle English, will know that there are observable similarities between modern sounds and older sounds.

The various words we have, even the reconstruction of these words, show that some sounds haven't changed very much. For instance, our word *name* was just about that in the earliest form that we have been able to reconstruct for it, that is, it started with an [n] and it closed with [m] and it had some kind of vowel in between. This vowel has changed a little from time to time, but actually it has come out now just about what it was in the earliest reconstruction. Also, there must have been some body of association.

The word *man*, which has changed a little in sound but not too much from the earliest time that we know anything about it, suggested the species to which we belong and more particularly the male of that species. This is again a body of meaning or association or ability to call up something that hasn't

Serious students of dialects in the United States seek to reconcile the diverging groups and to provide the wider understanding of each other that a mature political community must gain to endure.

Raven I. McDavid, Jr., "American Social Dialects," *College English*, January 1965 changed in many thousands of years.

I don't mean to say that sound hasn't acquired new ability to call up associations or that it hasn't lost some. But, at least, we do have a long continuing set of sound and meaning and these somehow associate.

Etymology

I've already suggested that language is a set of symbols. We have these symbols; we don't know except within certain limits where they came from, and we don't know how they work. We have splendid etymological dictionaries, particularly the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, which has just been published.

Another very engaging and useful book, *Origins*, by Eric Partridge, approaches the etymology of words in a little different way than does the Oxford book. The author organizes material under larger units in a comprehensive treatment of a word and its relatives. The Oxford book, however, handles nearly 30,000 words, pursuing these words to their origin. In essence it gives an etymological statement about all the commonly used words in the language.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* has a staggering body of information collected in one set of volumes about one language. The editors of that dictionary undertook no less than to record the history of every word of any currency and of every use of that word in the English language from the time it appeared in the English language down to 1900. On the whole, the *Oxford English Dictionary* takes the words back to Old English. It lists the first citation that has been found for a word along with what may have been the immediate ancestor of this word, what it was like in Proto-Germanic — that is, what form can be postulated by comparing Old English with Old Norse and Gothic, and the like. But the book didn't go beyond that. The new etymological dictionary is actually the last volume of the *Oxford* because it does for etymologies what was not done in the *Oxford* itself.

The 19th century showed how these etymologies can be traced. We know, for example, that the word *mother* appears in English and the word *mater* occurs in Latin. We may not be able to figure their intersection as accurately as we could if we are triangulating to find a forest fire from two fire stations, but we do see that both words begin with "m," both have similar endings, both have only one main vowel, and there is another similarity which, although spelled differently in the two words, is the [t] sound. But you will notice that it is made by stopping the air — that is what we call a "plosive" or "stop," and we know that consonants are made by either stopping the air or disrupting it a little. If you disrupt the "tuh" you get something pretty close to a "huh." There, sounds are closer to each other than they seem when you spell them. And furthermore, if we were able to do this a lot of times, if, for instance, we compared *father* and *pater*, we would see that even though the English set is different from the Latin set, they differ in a consistent way. You have "tuh" in the Latin consistently where you have "thuh" in the English.

By means of progression into the past we can go back to the English and Latin roots of these words, back to the place where they must have separated. We can use another example. The words *mother* in English, *mutter* in German, *hound* in English, and *hund* in German are words that have a relatively simple similar sound. Also, *mutter* means the same thing in German that *mother* means in English. What we've found out is that we can assume that English and German have some kind of common ancestor. Swedish and Danish have a common ancestor, and French, Spanish, and Italian have a common ancestor in Latin. Now, according to what we have already said about *mother* and *mater*, and *father* and *pater*, it looks as though we could go back and reconstruct ancestors to those. This is the basis of modern and reliable investigation of language.

For a long time we didn't suspect this. It's rather curious, looking at it now, that we didn't suspect it. Every literate person in western Europe for a thousand years knew that there were languages like French, Italian, and Spanish, and that although these languages were different, they came from Latin. They had the evidence right there before them, everybody knew it, but they did nothing about it. People went right on assuming that language had somehow happened and that the fact that languages were related to one another was something that somehow happened and you didn't go beyond that.

Great Discovery

It took an intelligent Englishman serving in India (and maybe one or two others) to get the idea. The Englishman, being an English public servant, was an educated man; he knew Latin and Greek, and, of course, he knew English. When he got to India he found evidence of an ancient language, Sanskrit, and to him the similarities among Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit were just too great to be coincidental. Once the suggestion of relationship had been made, you could just see the evidence everywhere. It was picked up by the scholars, Rasmus Rask and Franz Bopp, and their work was elaborated by Jacob Grimm, one of the Grimm Brothers of the fairy tales.

Since that time, in the early 19th Century, we have had a sound understanding of the nature of language and we've been able to add to that tremendous bodies of material.

You can find charts of the family of languages in many books on language and in the front of most good dictionaries.

We can reconstruct a language which we call Indo-European, abbreviated IE. *Indo-Europeans* is not, we assume, what these people called themselves. We don't know what they called themselves, maybe just "the people," which is what people usually call themselves as though there aren't any other. But we've called the language Indo-European as a sort of description of where it existed, because the descendants of this lineage are found all the way from India, westward through most of Europe.

In some books IE is called Aryan because one of the early research workers on the subject found the word *Ar* and he rightly guessed that this was the same word as in Eire. The word *Ar* means something similar to preparing ground for growing, and the researcher assumed that *Ar* was a plow because there was also evidence that these Indo-Europeans had horses. Therefore, he called these people the "plow people." Unfortunately, later we found that although the Indo-Europeans had horses, they milked them instead of using them as draft horses. But these Indo-European people did spread out from central eastern Europe and did so quite rapidly, carrying their language with them. This may have happened around 6,000 B.C., which is a good, rough guess now.

Some of these people went southeast through the Khyber Pass into what is now India and took over the more fruitful parts of the subcontinent. The language that they brought with them was what we call Sanskrit and from that has descended the modern Indian languages.

Dialects

After they got to India, some of them crossed back past the Himalayas to the north. Some years ago, the ruins of cities were dug up in the Gobi Desert and archaeologists found clay tablets and other artifacts which, when compared to reconstructed European or even to early Sanskrit, made it apparent that the writing on the tablets was in a language descended from Indo-European. We call this language Tocharian and it was sufficiently distributed in the Gobi Desert to be recorded in two forms, Tocharian A and Tocharian B. Why were there two dialects? Here is one thing we mean when we say that language always changes. If two sets of people speaking basically the same language are thrust into two sets of places, apparently they'll originate language variations and in time they will be speaking noticeably differently with the distinct possibility that eventually they won't be able to understand one another. Placing people in separate areas creates what we call *dialect*, i.e., when languages change enough so that you notice a marked difference but not enough so that people can't understand each other.

Now, we're in the presence of another concept. I have told you that language always changes. I have to go further and say that no person ever speaks exactly the same language that another person speaks. An individual's pattern of speech or language is an idiolect. Up there in the Gobi Desert, there were a lot of people like you and me, each one industriously speaking his own idiolect. But they got broken up enough so that one group spoke Tocharian A and another spoke Tocharian B, and probably there were some Tocharian C speakers who were unfortunate in not having their clay tablets survive. There never was a time, however, when half of the Sanskrit speakers decided to speak Tocharian A and half of them Tocharian B. Languages change infinitesimally. So, one would not say that Indo-European became Sanskrit and Sanskrit became Indian; this just isn't true. We have some samples of the language as spoken 2,500 years ago (quite different from what they're speaking in India now) but the change didn't come in one grand, wild leap of 2,500 years. The language kept changing and the people that were speaking Sanskrit were no more aware of that change than we are that we were talking in a slightly different idiolect yesterday.

There obviously have been hundreds of dialects and perhaps languages that we don't know anything about that died out. We have no reason to think that these languages died because the children got to saying "ain't." The languages died because the speakers died or because they were overcome in war, politics, society, or something else. Languages cannot die of themselves. They die only because something untoward happens to the speakers of the language. But many languages have died, of course. We know of more than 3,000 languages that did exist on earth and there are many fewer than that now.

The Hellenic languages were another subfamily of IE. Some of these people moved east and used what we call Old Slavonic and that's given us Russian, Polish, and various other Slavic languages. Some of these moved west and this western division included languages like Celtic and Latin, offshoots of Celto-Italic. The Celts tended to be in northwestern Europe, on the peninsulas and islands, and the Welsh, Irish, and Gaels and Bretons are remnants of them. Meanwhile, the southern movement of the western stream (sometimes called Italic) gave us Latin and, as you know, from Latin comes the Romance Languages.

Proto-Germanic Origins

The IE language that we're most interested in is Proto-Germanic. Proto-Germanic broke up into various dialects, West Germanic, North Germanic, and East Germanic. There probably was a South Germanic, too. Perhaps the greatest of all these Germanic peoples, so far as their impact was concerned at the time, were the Burgundians, but today we don't have a whisper of Burgundian. We don't know what it was like except that it must have been a Germanic tongue. If any of our ancestors had been pious and zealous enough to translate the Bible into Burgundian, we might know something about the language today. But I gather they weren't. One Egyptian — Ufilas — was pious and zealous enough to translate parts of the Bible into the Germanic language that he knew and hence, we do know something about Gothic today. Ufilas' translation of the Bible survived in a unique manuscript in Sweden.

The Goths were pushed out of the way by the invading Huns and other people bringing another kind of language. They were speaking a Ural-Altaic language from Siberia. These people went down into the Balkan Peninsula, over into the Italian Peninsula, conquered and sacked Rome, went on to what is now southern France, down to Spain, down in North Africa, and, finding they didn't like North Africa after all, came back to Spain and settled in southern France. One branch of these people went north. They lived in the northern part of Europe and up into what is now the Scandinavian Peninsula, and after a while they spoke what we call Old Norse. Old Norse resembles Old English in some ways but is distinct. And from Old Norse comes Icelandic, Danish, Swedish, and other tongues in that area.

Some of them came west and from the West Germanic people we get High and Low German, meaning only that some lived up near mountains and some lived down near the seashore. The people who lived up toward the mountains spoke what is called Old High German which has now become modern German.

Those who lived down toward the seacoast had somewhat different dialects and from these have descended Frisian, Dutch, and other languages. Another group went over to the island of Britain and took with them notably different dialects. These resulted eventually into what we call Old English, and from that Middle English with more dialects, and from that Early Modern English with still more dialects.

I hope that you do something with dialects. Sometime during the year get some dialect records and play them to your students. An ordinary American simply cannot understand the variety of English dialects unless he hears some of them. You know a little about it now. You know that some people say "Balmore" and others say "Balmer." But this is a small difference. People hear a Cockney accent and they assume that Cockneys speak this way because they are uneducated people. What they don't realize is that Cockney is by no means the most distinctive British dialect, that there are many of them and that these are different enough so that a trained ear can tell the difference when he goes from one parish to the next one. People from one part of England understand people from another part of England only with great difficulty unless they are moderately well-educated. They speak British, you see, and they speak it a little differently in Cambridgeshire than they do in Lincolnshire but not enough so that it really interferes with communication. And you, as an American, will be still worse off. I have talked many times to Englishmen, and not only did I not know what they were saying, I didn't know what the subject of the conversation was.

There are a great variety of dialects and these dialects go right back to Old English, to the way in which differences were enforced by the Danish invasion and eventually the Norman invasion of England. I do not think the latter brought French to England with the rapidity that is often assumed, but, of course, it did have its effect, and particularly it had its effect because it shifted the capital of the city from Alfred's old capital at Winchester to London, which was much handier for the Normans. It was a much better port than Winchester, which was not a port at all. The connections with the Continent were better so that French influences began countering in London. And as the trade built up, as the importing of ideas built up, and as the importing of goods built up, these came into the area.

Philology

This tremendous idea that languages existed as they do because they had come into being by descent and on the analogy of the family, was nearly concurrent with the growth of the German university, and German scholars, on the whole, built up this whole family tree, not only the family tree for Indo-European but for other bodies of language such as Ural-Altaic, that great body of languages in Northern Asia of which Finnish is a language of a subgroup called Finno-Ugric; the Semitic body of languages including Hebrew; and the Sinitic body including a large number of Oriental languages. Many more are not as large as these but we've been able to relate almost all known languages to some other known languages and reconstruct family trees for them. Here and there you'll find a poor waif we don't know anything about and Basque is one of these. We're beginning to guess now that perhaps Basque descended from the Ligurians.

This endeavor to understand language by reconstructing the past of language and making this reconstruction mainly upon the written record was the job of philologists. The philologists knew that language was spoken, were quite aware that the Indo-European could not have been able to write. If they had been pinned down they would have admitted that language was sound and that one had to think about it as sound (Grimm's Law is a statement of the relationships of the sound of the consonants) but they tended most to think about language as written language, concentrating on the dead languages because these were the most interesting ones to them.

Relatively recently, we have had a different approach based upon the assumption that language has individual sounds and that these sounds can be identified. For instance, when you say the word *tutor*, notice that you do not put your tongue in the same place for the first *t* as you do for the second *t*. When saying the word *bit*, you will find that you put your tongue in still a third place for the *t*. The *t*, then, has three different sounds at least. One is initial, one is terminal, and another is the medial. And I am sure you could find more *t* sounds in English than that one.

This was a revolutionary idea. It got people to look closely at contemporary language; they discovered they could find out all sorts of things about language if they examined it very closely in the way it exists now, as a living language, and from this approach has come the science of linguistics. I think an acceptable definition, maybe the most useful one, of linguistics is that it embodies all the procedures for studying language in a way which is likely to put the emphasis upon the working languages that we know. So this doesn't mean that linguists deny philology. They recognize that linguistics has grown straight out of philology, for which linguists now use the term *historical linguistics*.

All philologists use the languages that still exist; all philologists know that the sound was important; all philologists try to think about the ways sounds change and the way meanings change and the relationships of language to human beings, to the users of it, but linguists shifted the emphasis a little more. They are relatively more concerned with language and they have developed specific techniques which were unknown to the philologists. For example, you could call linguistic geography one of the modern techniques. It was actually discovered by a philologist but it was put to work by the modern linguist as one of a number of techniques characteristic of modern language study.

I've already pointed out that all languages presumably come from an earlier language and that these languages may be in a language family. There has never been a time when the words that you speak that have come from Indo-European have not been in your language. A word like *feet* put your ancestors back at least as far as Indo-European. Every one of them called these pedal extremities "feet." They didn't necessarily pronounce it that way but they had some sounds that denoted those objects and thus you have the descent within the language. I emphasize descent because one is inclined to say "comes from." Here, "comes from" means it comes from Indo-European and it just kept coming all the time.

If you'll look in the dictionary, you'll find that a relatively small percentage of the words you use have come to us in that way. They're likely to be very important words — they're "man," "woman," "house," "home." These are the words people live with; they're likely also to be "and," "but," "of," "into," "off," and so forth — the kind of words we speak with. But the words that come from someplace else than Indo-European are very much more numerous.

Borrowed Words

Here, then, we are in the presence of the process of borrowing. Anytime a body of people has contact with another body of people, some words will leap across this barrier.

This is a different phenomenon. A word like "foot" has come right down from Indo-European speakers and there's never been a time when your ancestor was not using the word "foot." But only recently have we been using the American Indian "pogonip" and the Pennsylvania Dutch "cruller" and "panhaus." They are borrowed from someplace else and we have gotten them because we had some kind of contact with people who used that word and for some reason we thought it would be handy to have the word. So we just took it. I think it will be interesting to youngsters and be fruitful for them to know that most of our common words come from Old English and that most of our specialized words are borrowed. If we want to make people's backbones tingle, we use a very large part of Old English words because those are the bone-tingling words, those are the words people have lived with.

As I have said, English is an Indo-European language, part of the Germanic branch of that language. The ancient Germanic-speaking people had already had some contact with the culture that was flowing north. Roman traders worked through them because Roman goods were much better than the goods they had, and Roman words began to infiltrate their language. For instance, an inlet from the sea into which you could get away from a storm, was a harbor or a haven, i.e., it was a place of safety. But if this thing was developed with marine facilities by the Romans, it acquired the Roman name and was called a port — and one distinguished between a haven and a port. A haven was a phenomenon of nature, a place that had always been there; a port was manmade, something with wharves and piers that could handle vessels of the size the Romans used.

More words came from the Continent, particularly when Christianity was imported and more or less became the official religion. A great body of the early import borrowings in vocabulary were Latinate words involving ecclesiastical terminology.

It is extremely unusual to find a word that has been devised in recent times. New uses for old words are constantly being devised, but the great bulk of the words in ours or any other language, so far as we've been able to discover, have either descended from ancestral languages or been borrowed from someplace else. They already exist in that language, and we just take them more or less whole.

The major fact of our history is that most of what we have we borrowed and we borrowed on a line from the eastern Mediterranean, west of the Mediterranean, north across Europe, and from the British Isles to this country. We have a great body of words that have come to us from France, but some of these words got into French in a special way. The word "franc" is a Germanic word. The French picked up a few words from the Germans. They were Gauls and the Gauls were Celts, so the French picked up a few Celtic words. Of course, we borrowed them. We didn't care or know whether they were Celtic, Greek, or Latin, or what they were.

We have borrowed, then, from French, we have borrowed from Latin before it got to French, we have borrowed from Greek before it got to Latin, and so on. The result is that we have a large body of borrowed words. Those borrowed words can come from many sources but by a curious accident we have borrowed most of them from right within the Indo-European family.

When the Germanic-speaking Norsemen came to Britain they brought their dialects with them but some changes which had already taken place in Old English had not taken place in Norse. For instance, the [k] sound which was common in Germanic tongues had become [tʃ] in some (but not all) English dialects. You can still attend a "kirk" in Scotland, but when [k] became [tʃ] the word became "church." This sound change did not take place in Old Norse. One modern word that descended from the Old English stream is *shirt*, and if it had come through Old Norse it would have been *skirt*. That is, the [ʃ] in Old English represents an [s] plus [k] sound which did not change in Old Norse.

The impact is not very great, as a matter of fact, because modern English descends mainly from the dialect of London. And thus it did not preserve so many of these northern forms. If it hadn't been for the Norman influence, which made London the capital, we might very well be using more *k*, *g*, and *sk* sounds than we do.

As I've said before, there isn't any break in language. The Normans came in in 1066, and while historians tend to end the Old English period around the year 1100, this doesn't mean that people stopped talking Old English on January 1, 1100, and started talking Middle English. There were dialects and these dialects went on. But language did change — English changed — at a remarkable speed in the Middle English period. And it changed rapidly, for a number of reasons.

Reasons for Changes

One is that language is likely to change when it's fighting for its life. And Old English was not only fighting for its life; it was fighting the underdog fight — or it looked that way. All the learned people were speaking and writing Latin. But it wasn't the Latin that survived. And the more fashionable people, the business people, anybody who had to get money out of the government, were speaking French. French was the business language, the language that people were taught, the thing they learned in school. Or it was French of a sort, developed by whatever teachers they had who had learned French as a second language. But the main language was obviously not English. It was something that came in with the Normans and developed from the Normans. And sometimes it developed a long way.

Just to show you how far this sort of thing eventually went, here is a handsome sentence picked up by R.W. Chambers out of the law courts: "Il jeter un brickbat qui narrowly missed." Most of this is French.

Clearly, during this time things were happening to Middle English with its confusion with French. One thing that began to happen fairly soon was that Middle English picked up a large number of French words. These did not come mainly in the Anglo-Norman dialect. They did not begin to come in any number at all until a couple of hundred years after the invasion, in the Middle Ages so far as culture was concerned. The Mediterranean culture which had been building up was now rolling in heavily, because the English people eventually conquered France. Many more words were borrowed while the Englishmen were running France than there were while the Frenchmen were running England. Who beat whom doesn't make very much difference to language, but who uses whose goods does. And there's no question that the goods were going mainly in one direction and that the words went right along with them.

You can find many examples of this. One example is found in Chaucer. When Chaucer speaks of an ordinary clock, the kind one might have in one's home, he calls it a clock. That is, it was an Old English instrument, perhaps not a very good one, but it was such as they had. But in the passage in the "Nun's Priest Tale" in which he's telling how accurate was the rooster's sense of time, he says that the rooster's crowing was more accurate than the *horloge*. A horloge, of course, is just a French clock but it was the kind that was imported from abroad and put up in the clock tower. So, if you imported goods and ideas, you also imported the words with them and you used your regular vocabulary for your native stuff.

The greatest body of borrowing, the highest percentage of borrowing, that the English have ever done was in the Fourteenth Century, and the new words came mainly from French and after that from Latin.

When London became the capital, a lot of Midlanders moved down to London. Although people were coming from every direction to London, on the whole, the great bulk of people, the great bulk of culture, tended to be northern and eastern, as against southern and western. Because London was making itself felt throughout the country, this midland dialect became the central dialect as far as the growth of the language is concerned.

One handsome old fib perpetuated in the textbooks is that English grew from the dialect of London because Chaucer wrote the language undefiled and that he was the one that fixed the language for us. But poets are not the determiners of the language. A good poet certainly has more impact upon the language than a good cabdriver has, but it is probable that all the cabdrivers of the world have more impact on the language than all the poets of the world because there are just more cabdrivers. And students are going to do more to determine the language than teachers will.

The Dialect of London

Modern English descends more than anywhere else from the dialect of London just because that was where the industry centered, that was where the commerce centered, that was where the government centered, that was where the society centered, that was where the thinking centered. London rapidly became the biggest city, and it was also the exporter of the language as well as it was the developer of the language. So that, for instance, if you'd compare Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* with the contemporary work, *Gawane and the Green Knight* which was probably written in London, too, although by a northwesterner, you will find that the language in *Gawane and the Green Knight* appears to be about two hundred years older. Why? Because the changes in language were centering in the southeast. The grammar was becoming more simplified; the endings were falling off more; probably some of the changes in sound that are characteristic of Modern English were already developing as well as a great efflorescence of vocabulary and a specialized vocabulary. The horse and his accoutrements were well-named; they usually carried French names because the military equipment was developed in France or on the Continent and came through France, and the horse and his rider were handsomely adorned with fancy French-named armor. But any kind of specialization, and kind of development, was likely to be the center of a whole body of importation of foreign terms. The more learned used Latin terms, the less learned used French terms, and the good, snug, homey people still used Old English.

The great English vowel shift was just beginning to move through the language so that for practical purposes we can use the same sound system on Middle English that we use on Old English, except that by then the dialects were more pronounced.

Grammatical Changes

Grammar was changing very rapidly. Most of the fairly complicated endings were no longer so complicated. The genitive plural of a good many Old English words was "ena," but it doesn't occur very frequently in Middle English. Those endings that had been made up of a vowel and a consonant were likely now to be reduced to a vowel — to the "schwa." There was no regularity about this. Chaucer used an infinitive without any ending, he used an infinitive with an "e" ending, he used an infinitive with an "en" ending, as it was in Old English — all depending upon whichever one happened to fit his rhythm and his rhyme scheme. Obviously, he was hearing them all on the streets of London and he would use any one of them just as a poet today feels that he can rhyme a-g-a-i-n with either *rain* or *hen* and be entirely respectable.

There was obviously great variety of pronunciation. The northerners spoke with many more velar consonants, and if you don't believe that Chaucer had noticed this, read *The Reeve's Tale* where he introduces a couple of boys who are talking a northern dialect. So far as we can reconstruct the dialect of the north, Chaucer was reproducing it quite accurately. And if there is some little difficulty in applying modern sentence patterns to Old English there is almost no difficulty with Chaucer. You can read it, as far as word order is concerned, as though it were Modern English.

Mechanics become particularly interesting in Middle English. In the Old English period, most people did not write and if they did, they wrote in Latin.

With the two prominent dialects of the Middle English period problems presented themselves. A westerner would write *weold,* for *world,* an easterner would write *werld.* One word *girl* was spelled *gyrl* or *gurl* in the west and *gerl* or *girl* in the east. The dialectal differences led to differences in spelling. I've seen one manuscript, a publication of the Early English Text Society, in which the scribe used the same word in four successive lines of poetry and he did not spell it the same way twice in any of those four lines. Scribes obviously didn't have any agreement between them about spelling and some just didn't bother. The idea of correctness in spelling simply didn't exist.

Punctuation was beginning to be used a little although it had not been much used earlier. The oldest punctuation mark is the apostrophe. It appeared because when the alphabet from which the Latin alphabet descends was first developed it contained only consonants and just didn't bother with the vowels. People were supposed to know enough to put in the vowels, and they merely put a little mark at the top of the word to indicate the omission of the vowel. This mark became our apostrophe, which still indicates an omission.

Punctuation

About this time — the 14th and 15th centuries — more use was being found for punctuation although there was no uniform system. A dot would appear at the top, or at the bottom, or in the middle, and, apparently, for some people each of these positions had a meaning. With Caxton's first printing some uniformity began to appear out of necessity. Caxton used almost nothing but slanted lines at the end of sentences and this served him well except when he got to the end of a paragraph. But it took the printers to show us how to punctuate.

Printing, however, was not a linguistic phenomenon. It was an economic one; Caxton printed almost all textbooks, or relatively popular books of instruction, or religious books.

Caxton published only one book written by a contemporary which one would call literary, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur,* and Caxton published it because he thought it was history.

Practically speaking, except for a rather slight normalization of mechanics, printing had relatively little influence upon language.

The Renaissance, Shakespeare's time, before and after, was marked by another great influx of culture, flowing in from the Continent in the 15th and 16 centuries, in fact to the 17th century. But it wasn't a rebirth of something dead. It was a shift in emphasis, and it certainly was an acceleration.

Grammar had gone on changing rapidly. By Shakespeare's time, most of the endings were gone. We haven't been able to lose endings since Shakespeare's time (we didn't have very many left to lose) and some of those that we kept have been pretty useful. We wouldn't need to use the plural in a language, we could get along without a plural, but it is a handy device. The fairly obvious changes that were occurring were less use of inflection, more rigidity in the sentence pattern, and more development of devices like the subordinate clauses and verbal constructions.

By the 18th century, language was pretty orderly in appearance. Spelling was a little different, but not much different. People still didn't know what to do about punctuation. They were using a lot of colons where we would use semicolons, but they were conscious of punctuation and they taught it. And their idea, apparently, was to let punctuation indicate the amount of pause that an actor would use on the stage — counting one beat for a comma, two for a semicolon, three for a colon, and four for a period.

But there was no agreement as to how to use capitals. Some people capitalized all nouns and printed all proper nouns in italics.

In spite of a lot of variety, people obviously were working toward some kind of regularity.

By now they were talking about vocabulary, and there were those who didn't like "newfangle" words, as they called them. The word was from Middle English — *newe fangel*. One should use only English words, they said, and not terms cooked up out of Latin. Another argument was whether to use more Latin *words*, not more Latin, because by now, of course, Latin was taught in the schools. All educated people knew Latin, and they could deliberate on these matters. Other people defended the beauties of the English language. Spanish and similar languages were considered effeminate but English had the good virtues of solid English yeoman.

Policing the Language

All sorts of people now knew Latin and they were beginning to write grammars. Ben Jonson wrote a grammar of English on the basis of Latin. He just took a Latin grammar and found some English examples to fit the Latin rules. Such grammars were the basis of the English grammar for a good many years. By the 18th century, grammars were being written in English instead of in Latin but they were still based on Latin grammar.

People had now become concerned with how to behave. Because London had become a fashionable court, one had to do the right thing, the elegant thing, the appropriate thing. So all sorts of people were policing the language. "This was right, that was wrong." "This was barbarous and not only was this barbarous, but everything everybody else wrote was barbarous." "I'm the only one who knows the language," one of these would say, "and the others are all wrong." If he could find a Latin rule to fit a case, it was right. If they couldn't find a Latin rule to fit, it was wrong.

The 18th century was sure that Latin was right and that English was wrong. The 18th century relied on what they considered a fundamental principle called universal grammar. Their notion was that since God gave us language, he must have given us grammar, and that whatever grammar we got from him would be divine, perfect, and holy, and that any change of this grammar must be a decline from it. All one had to do was just to go back to whatever God gave us and that would be correct. One assumed that this grammar would be Latin because, after all, Latin was what God and the angels spoke in Heaven.

The reason one couldn't find as much grammar in English as in Latin was not that — as we understand today — because the languages were essentially different and the grammars couldn't be expected to be the same, but that English, something spoken in the barbarous islands off the coast of Europe, naturally, would have declined more than God's own language, Latin, or Greek, the language of the highly respected Aristotle. Between God and Aristotle one would find the nearest thing to perfect grammar, the nearest thing to a universal grammar. If one wanted to find out whether an item of grammar was right or wrong, he just went back to Latin and Greek; here, while one might not be quite at God's elbow, at least he could be fairly close to His footstool.

Cartesian Linguistics, a new book by Noam Chomsky published by Harper and Row, is going to attract quite a lot of attention. Chomsky points out that a man like Descartes was smart enough to realize that there must be something like a universal grammar; that is, since we are all human beings with somewhat similar minds, if we got deep enough into language, we must come to a place where there's something universal in it. And by universal grammar Descartes means the inevitable relationship everywhere between language and mankind. But to the 18th century mind, universal grammar meant Latin grammar.

Grammar is not of the earth solid. It comes from life and is to be understood as life, growing, changing, phantasmagoric. We have not always understood this. We have sometimes tended to study grammar as we study geology, the record of something laid down rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun. Instead, we should study it as we study zoology, a subject order with system, with symmetry, yet one in which change is the essence, not the accident. True, some grammar must be pursued as we pursue paleontology, the persistent remains of old life. But although the paleontologist is studying trilobites as part of a now unalterable record, if he studies them only as rock he will never understand them. As records they are revealing of life and time, and as time they are dioramas of ancient life.

So bits of old grammar can be studied as sounds which no longer seem regular or as spelling problems to trouble the young. But as records they reveal time and the human mind in the ancient sea of living language. Grammarians have sometimes misread the record because rigidity in grammar has its philosophical foundations in the 18th-century concept of universal grammar; it recruited its scholars from among the authoritarians, from among those who love security and authority more than they love life. Even the more liberal students of language have not always been mindful of the zoologic nature of grammar.

The philologists, for example, endeavored to study language objectively. They did excellent work upon which modern linguistics has its firm foundation. But they sometimes forgot that in language the study of a letter of the alphabet killeth but the sound giveth life. A word may acquire grammar from its circumstances as in: "How are you coming?" "Finished."

Even physical circumstances may supply a sort of grammar. For example, the sign on a store front, "John Bean Jewelry," does not imply that the proprietor's middle name is "Bean." These minor evidences of grammar help to define grammar itself, to put limits to it. Grammar is the elaborate formalized and highly specialized means with which linguistic units can be used so that a language becomes adequate for the subtle and infinite demands made upon it.

Curious Paradox

We must now observe a curious paradox. Although grammar is universal in the sense that all languages have grammar and apparently must have it, no two languages have been discovered which use the same grammar. No language has ever been discovered that used only one grammatical procedure. All languages use some combination of more than one grammatical principle, and each of these various devices is apparently almost infinite in its possibilities.

English uses word order as a linguistic device. A "cold head" is not the same as a "head cold"; "grammar, science of the" means nothing except in an index; "grammar, the of science" means nothing at all.

In language we're likely to have two sorts of things: linguistic units that are associated with meaning, and some way of working with them. We can either keep them apart or we can put them together. On the whole, our attention has been drawn most to putting them together because the grammar that we've tended to venerate has been one that has put them together in certain ways. We can guess that units of language tend to get together in some such way as this.

Suppose we have a unit that means "woman," and another unit that means "lots of." If we then have quite a number of these charming creatures we can stick the symbols together and we have "lots of women." Likewise, if we have something that means "ducks," we can combine it with the "lots of" unit and get "lots of ducks." Now, pretty soon we have some symbol that means "more than one." We can assume that this is the way plurals developed, that we had a meaningful designation which became a classifier, a classifier which could then be attached to anything to obtain some kind of recognized use.

Language students tended to notice that some two units can be put together and retain their integrity. For instance, we certainly do this in making vocabulary, what we call compounding. The classroom blackboard used to be called a blackboard because it was a black board. Now many people call them chalkboards. But in any event, "black" and "board" and "chalk" are all units and can be used without each other for semantic purposes, but, of course, they can be used for grammatical purposes, too. Or we can have a unit that has a meaning and which can be used by itself. To it, we can append things that cannot be used by themselves but still do have a known use, the things we call affixes: prefixes, if they come at the beginning, infixes, if they come at the middle, and postffixes or suffixes if they come at the end. English does use this device within limits for grammatical purposes. For instance, suppose I invented a gadget and called it a "gipso." Then if I attached it to another machine it would be said that I had "gipsoized" that machine. And if you knew what a "gipso" is, you would know what "gipsoizing" is. I could adapt this to a television set and therefore have "gipsoized" television. Once a word has a meaning, it can pick up the suffix *-ize* and the like.

We have the term "synthetic," putting things into a whole, for the kinds of grammar that I've been describing and other terms, "inflectional," for example, are used for these.

One assumes that there's a kind of a progression here; that we start by sticking together meaningful units, roughly keeping the meaning that they had, and then doing this so much that we get to using a unit just for that purpose even though it still retains some of its old life as a meaningful unit. And then, finally, it goes on so much that it doesn't any longer have this life.

This, of course, is all postulation because we have no language that we have been able to trace through this whole sequence. But it seems plausible that if we start sticking things together, when they are linguistic units, we can't go any further than the time when they're reduced to no meaning at all but a use, probably as some kind of classifiers. And most of these classifiers are quite small. Sometimes we get them with several syllables, as *ena* in Old English, a genitive plural where we probably have the remains of two classifiers run together, one indicating plural and one indicating something like possession.

Another aspect of combination is sometimes called incorporation. This is a device which English uses a little. If somebody says, "Get out!" he needn't include the subject, but we would assume that the subject is included in the verb.

You know that Latin uses incorporation to a considerable extent. It can put any of the pronouns that can be used as the subject within the verb. Some American languages not only incorporate the subject in the verb; they also incorporate the object in the verb so the verb shows who's doing what to whom and why.

It is possible for even one of these principles of combining to become quite complex. Indo-European had more than a dozen different classes of nouns. And Indo-Europeans had three different classifications of modifiers. So there was one set of endings on the nouns, another set of endings on the modifier and in Anglo-Saxon even the article was declined. So you could get the article declined one way, the modifier declined another way, and the noun declined still a different way. These things can become complicated.

The other way of handling the linguistic units is analytic, keeping them apart in various ways. One of the most obvious things is to change the order; we can have a fairly rigid order for things if they go together one way and a different order if they go together another way. We can build up fairly rigid patterns. Once we hear the syllable "the" we have started a sequence which has to end in a name for something. We may say, "The very cantankerous, long-nosed, objectionable. . ." but we've got to get to "man" or something like it; we can't just keep going.

Obviously, other sorts of things can be done. We can use some kind of word to indicate a relationship. Say "of ducks" and everyone knows that the *ducks* are now related to something else. It can be *dozens of ducks*. It can be a number of things, but *ducks* has now been introduced into some kind of sequence in which modification is involved. The word *of* — which nobody can define — indicates relationships. And, obviously, English has gone on using this device. It's clearly one that we have been developing. In earlier Old English, even where we can find some order we can't translate it with any certainty unless we know the paradigm system that had descended more or less from Indo-European. And as English changed, the order became important; the inflections became less important; the inflections became less important until now we do not have many of them anymore. At the same time, these other devices were developing. Indo-European had verbs but no use for what we call auxiliaries because the verb carried within itself classifiers which indicated how it was being used.

We find more complex verbs in Old English, but, relatively speaking, not very many, but we now have great streams of them. "I could not go to the concert last evening but I should have liked to have been able to go." We can build up extremely exact words. That process obviously has grown in English. Old English, of course, had no specific future. It used the present for the future and maybe it wasn't very much interested in the distinction between what is going on now and what is not quite yet going on. But, if it had to make that distinction, it had ways of making it with other words, devices to indicate time.

Old English did, however, have a few words that were turned to this purpose, although presumably in Old English they were not yet used to this way. It had the word "sculan" which meant "ought to, should have an obligation."

We can say now, "Mary is going to get married." If this sentence had been said long enough ago, the assumption would have been that Mary is undergoing transportation. She's afoot or she's on horseback or she's in a buggy. And when this movement stops, she will be at the point at which matrimony will occur. That's not what it means any more. That is, the semantic meaning of "is going" is almost completely lost, and it's obviously becoming a future.

There is no one language so far as we know and there never has been a language that can be described by one principle in grammar because languages always use more than one. But if a language uses one kind dominantly, for convenience we call it by that principle. And on that basis we would characterize modern English as an analytic language. For grammatical purposes, we use word order. We use the words that we have taken from elsewhere and make them into auxiliary kinds of things. We clearly use this device more than we use inflection.

But since there will always, so far as we know, be more than one grammatical principle at work in any language in any given time, there is no such thing as the grammar of English or of any other language, if you think of grammar, as most people do, as a body of grammatical statements.

All modern grammarians now quite frankly agree that it's possible to accept not only one of several fundamental principles of language but also one of several secondary decisions. They apply the principle of parsimony and adopt whatever gives them the simpler and better ordered statement.

Grammatical Statement

A grammatical statement is a human edifice. It's something that we raise in order to promote our understanding of the language. It's not what's there. It isn't possible to say what's there. We may come close enough to it so that most people will agree, or at least we may come close enough to it so that we get an ordered statement. But all we can hope is that once we have established our assumption, we can come to something like an agreement as to what the statement about the language would be.

The grammar that got started when we first became self-conscious about grammar was based upon Latin grammar, and based to a remarkable degree on an elementary Latin book, of all things. There were better ones but they were hard to come by. The one book that was readily come by, and the one that teachers knew and used, was the one that labeled the eight parts of speech. And that's the reason we have eight parts of speech, because, in the simplifying manner in the Middle Ages, it was decided there were eight parts of speech in Latin. If Latin was the universal grammar, there must be eight parts of speech in English. So we conjured up eight parts, and there've been eight parts ever since. This is the assumption that the language will be best described by identifying the parts of speech.

If we examine English, it's pretty hard to determine what the parts of speech are except as we find a word in use. But in an inflectional language if the word carries within it a form, and this form means that this word can work in only certain ways, the part of speech idea becomes applicable. If we learn Latin, we scrupulously learn that certain forms can be this, or this, or that, and we check to see which one will make sense in this sentence. Within limits we can describe the grammatical properties of any given form in the Latin language. In English, however, form is not the best approach, although it certainly has its use, for English operates under more than the one principle inherited from Latin.

This was, on the whole, the approach to grammar in the 19th century: defining the parts of speech. People through the 19th century tried to be scientific. And the grammatical theorists called themselves scientific. That is, they had found a way to study language objectively to an extent it had not been studied before. They had found a way of expressing the history of a word and how that word grew. They called this being scientific and compared to the irresponsible thinking about language that had gone on before, it was scientific. Etymology was more scientific than grammar because it was relatively easy to trace the development of a word, but how could they measure grammar? They could, a little, by naming the parts of speech and defining them but this wasn't very scientific particularly since many words just wouldn't fit the definition.

Valid Grammar

Early in this century, in trying to find a way of being more scientific about language, people realized that languages could be approached from one point of view — sound. We're assuming now that we will get a valid grammar by starting from sound. And whether or not it's the most useful grammar, the most nearly valid grammar, at least this approach is legitimate if it develops as a way that is consistent within itself.

The starting of language study with sound was combined with another idea, that is, that sound will always have some kind of order of appearance. Languages have some kind of rigid structure and you can, by definition, reduce any language to its units of sound and then determine the order in which these sounds can occur, what the structuralists call the "privilege of occurrence." They analyze the language on a structural basis by first breaking it down into all of the sounds and then finding out which can occur with others and in what order they occur. And when they get that they have an objective description of the language on a fairly simple basis. This is what is called structural analysis or structuralism, or more commonly structural linguistics.

The structuralist works on existing language and tries to extract the grammar from it but we've lately decided to work on the language that is coming into being and find out how it comes. Because since this is language in process of generation, we call it the generative grammar of the language as it is developing. Generative grammarians have tried to write out the laws that would describe the way the English language comes to be.

This gets pretty complicated unless you use another device called "Transformation." For instance, the sentence, "The dress is red," can be transformed into the phrase "red dress." Conversely, adjectives can all be transformed into one of several types of sentences. This allows you to make a much simpler statement description of the whole language, but I'm not going to go into that at this time. It can get elaborate and, as far as I'm concerned, that's the difficulty with it. It rapidly gets elaborate.

You'll find that Noam Chomsky's little book, *Syntactic Structures*, is the foundation of this abuse of generation in grammar. This is a little book of a little more than 100 pages and it is one of the toughest little books that I have ever encountered. I read it again and again till I knew what he was saying. But he gets only just barely past the simple sentence and I can tell you that so far as I'm concerned the major problem in grammar is not to be found in the simple sentence. But anyway, you will hear more about that and more about its uses, if it has uses, and it now looks as though it has great uses. It's being used in many schools and with quite a lot of apparent success.

We should, however, develop a different grammatical statement. Are we to start with the assumption that function is primary in English and develop our description centrally upon function, using other grammatical concepts only when we need them? As yet this has not been done with entire success although great progress was made by the Danish grammarian, Otto Jespersen.

When I said that no satisfactory grammar of English has as yet been based upon function, I was not at all implying that the present statement would be satisfactory. If it is anything at all, it is a pioneering work, and pioneers characteristically make blunders which become laughable in light of later knowledge. As Sapir put it, all grammars leak. And I shall be happy if this one proves only moderately sieve-like. And even if it should prove to be essentially sound, it will be too brief to be adequate as a description of the working of the language. I make my observations about previous functional grammatical statements only to justify my attempt. Previous efforts to write a functional grammar of English have not been sufficiently successful to preclude further similar contributions. And I'd say that this does grow out of something I have already said in a still more elementary way in the *Miracle of Language*.[2]

I should admit that my grammatical statement will not be scientific. Most grammars are not scientific in any great sense. Exact science requires exact measurement, and no one has yet been able to measure all aspects of language exactly.

Structural linguistics makes some pretense to scientific accuracy and is more exact than the grammar I shall propose because it rests upon sound, which is measurable. But it can maintain even rough accuracy, at least at this time, only by ignoring the larger aspects of language.

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[2] Charlton Laird, *The Miracle of Language* (New York, Fawcett World Library, 1965).

The Main Use of Language

I shall endeavor to be as objective as I can, but that will not be very objective. I shall in part use meaning. Many students of grammar have demonstrated that meaning does not provide an adequate means of measuring grammar. But most students have found it reliable if it is used with restraint. Even in structural study it is used in deciding whether two locutions are or are not equal. I shall assume that, for grammatical purposes, the main use of language is to express or convey meaning. It can be used for other purposes, to make an impression, to relieve one's feelings, to produce musically pleasant sounds. But these minor purposes of language do not much involve grammar; consequently, I shall assume that sentences have different meaning. Having different meaning, they have a different grammar unless the difference is accounted for by the meanings of the words. I should say that *She is happy* and *She is sad* have the same grammar because the difference in meaning between the two seems to be accounted for by the difference between *happy* and *sad*. But *She is spanking her daughter* has a grammar which differs from *She is ashamed of her daughter* and *She is shamed by her daughter*. *Spanking her daughter* seems to have no equivalent in the two other sentences and *is* seems to work differently in the three sentences, as does *daughter*.

Here's another insight, handsomely illustrated by a tale which, however apocryphal it may be, reveals grammatical distinctions. According to the story, an American journalist working abroad needed to know the age of General Mark Clark. He wired his home office: *How old Mark Clark?* The recipient, finding this query facetious, replied, *Old Mark Clark fine. How you?*

This tale is revelational for the nature of English grammar and for the sense in which I am using meaning as a measure of grammar. In the sentence, *How old Mark Clark?* both the sender and the receiver recognized all the words and knew their possible uses. They even agreed as to the word that was "understood." But they were assuming two different orders, that is, two different positions in which the word "is" was to occur. The sender meant *How old is Mark Clark?* but the receiver assumed *How is old Mark Clark?* Transposing *old* and *is* gave different meanings to the statement and different uses to all words in the sentence except *Mark Clark*. The two sentences have different grammar because with the change of order the various words worked differently.

Grammatical Sense

To determine what function is, I shall have to rely upon something which is called grammatical sense. Admittedly, grammatical sense is not uniform or objective. And it has some of the same sort of objectivity that the structuralist claimed for the phoneme. Literate users of the language would recognize it and agree upon it. For example, most users of the language would agree upon the subject of most sentences once the subject has been pointed out to them. Now, of course, we shall find areas in which we're not certain of the function, but such uncertainty occurs in all grammatical statements about English, and probably in all other languages. And at worst we are likely to know when we are fairly sure of the function and when we are not. My grammatical conviction differs fundamentally from the belief of others who have written on the subject in that I am making more allowance than they have for the now well-recognized fact that English is, to a large degree, a distributive, isolating, or analytic language. *Isolating* and *distributive* mean the same thing as *analytic*.

Little study has been made of distribution as a device. I am not sure how generally true my assumption may be, but I am assuming that distribution as a grammatical principle tends toward fluidity in grammar. At least, I am convinced it does so in English, particularly in the more elaborate structures, and this fact has been insufficiently recognized, partly because of the way in which grammatical statements have been evolved. The grammarian often starts with a sentence, like *Adrian hates girls*, and notices that the subject is *Adrian*, the verb, *hates*, and the object, *girls*. It can scarely be denied that the subject is all subject and nothing but subject, the verb all verb, etc. Having established this principle in a simple sentence, the grammarian then assumes that something like this pattern or a similar one will follow through all sentences. They always start with these very elementary sentences in which you get as few words as possible and as few ideas as possible. And I believe, as I said before, that this is an unwarranted assumption, that in most sentences of any complexity in English the verb and the complement are not likely to be sharply distinguished but are apt to fade into each other in varied and subtle ways. For example, in the sentence, *Preparing the barbeque, the host turned on the spit,* we are forced to accept *spit* as the complement and *turned on* as the verb, since, in a noncannibalistic country, we cannot accept *on the spit* as a modifier telling where the host revolved. Similarly, *I expect to have Uncle Jules for dinner* seems to be clear. But *expect* does not here function quite the same as it does in *I expect the same old pork chops for dinner.* We should probably miss the ambiguity in *I expect to have Uncle Jules for dinner* because we should assume that the sentence means, *I expect to entertain Uncle Jules for dinner,* and not *I expect to broil Uncle Jules for dinner.* That is, *expect* can be a verb followed by a complement, as in *I expect pork chops for dinner* but in *I expect to have Uncle Jules for dinner,* we might argue for sometime as to where the verb stops. Is *expect* the verb, *to have* the object, or is the verb *expect to have?* As predicates become longer, we should probably face still more extensive confusion. In *You had better go about doing something to get that bicuspid filled,* what is *better?* It is indispensable to the sentence, but is it verb, or complement, or neither? What about *go?* It can scarcely be the verb since *I had go* makes no sense. Is it, too, an auxiliary? Is *to get* an infinitive, the complement, or is it a modifier of something? Or is it part of the verb *to get filled?* We might rather plausibly say that the verb is *had better go about doing,* and the object is *something to get that bicuspid filled.* But we shall still have problems in both the verb and the complement if we insist on being very specific as to which word is doing what.

The fact is, I believe, that usually in English words do not do one thing only, and the meaning of one word helps to determine the meaning and the grammar of other words. Consider the following: *Little Evelyn tore up the street* and *The diesel shovel tore up the street.* Both the meaning and the grammar of *tore up* vary with the power of Evelyn and the shovel. No doubt this fluidity is to a degree characteristic of all languages, and I personally suspect it is to be found in many grammars where it is not much revealed by the generally accepted grammatical statement concerning that language. But this is a large problem and, fortunately, not our immediate concern. We may suppose plausibly that fluidity is notably characteristic of distributive grammar, notably not characteristic of inflectional grammar. In inflection, the inflectional device identifies usually with some individual word and limits the nature and use of the word.

In Latin, if a word ends in *-us,* it can be a noun of the first declension used as subject or predicate nominative and not much else. Its other possible uses can be treated with something like finality. That is, its function is largely comprised within the word as well as revealed by its form.

In English, the function of a word is not usually revealed by its form and its function is revealed by its relationship with other words and is often shared with them. That is, we are dealing here not with absolutes but with strong tendencies. A Latin word may not comprise one function and nothing but that function within it, but we expect it to. An English word may comprise one function and nothing but that function within it, but we expect it not to.

Major Functions of Language

Let us examine the major functions which can be identified readily within the working of the language. I should say that they are five, as follows: (1) being subject; (2) being verb, that is, predicating; (3) completing the verb; (4) modifying; and (5) showing relationships. We may expect that individual words may participate in more than one of these functions and that most of these functions, notably all but the first, are likely to involve more than one word.

Of these five functions, we may as well start with the first, *being subject,* since it seems to be at once the simplest and the most certain. In one way or another, all English grammatical statements apparently recognize the existence of subjects, although not all grammar need so name them or make much of them.

Looked at largely, an English sentence can be broken down into subject and its modifiers. This seems to be the way English works — that we name a subject and then modify the concept involved in this subject. *The girls are talking. The girls are lively talkers. The girls, talking about their dates, chatter like stripped gears. The girls who have dates talk more than those who have not.* In these sentences, all the words except *girls* can be thought of as modifying our concept of the idea involved in *girls*. Of course, this statement is inadequate, but it may be suggestive of the essential spirit and the core pattern of English. English communicates largely by choosing the subject and modifies our concept of that subject. The next sentence will provide a different sort of modification of the same subject or it will provide another subject related to the first and modify that. The result is connected discourse with enough grammar between the sentences, although most of the sense is provided by the functioning of the words within the sentence. Frequently, as in the sentences I mentioned, the grammatical subject of the sentence is also the semantic subject. But, as we shall see, any assertion of this sort cannot be pushed very far.

Usually the subject is the first word in a sentence that can function as subject unless something is done to signal that it is not the subject. In certain fixed patterns the subject does not come first: *Are those girls as silly as they sound? There are good reasons to consider those girls silly.* In at least one pattern the grammatical subject is not the semantic subject. This pattern requires a verb in passive voice: *You were depressed by the silliness of the girls.*

We have noticed that words become subjects only if they can function as subjects. We have here a sort of parts-of-speech distinction, but the structure is called "privilege of occurrence." Sometimes the subject may be obscured. In the sentence *Dozens of girls were chattering on the schoolyard* the conventional statement would identify *dozens* as the subject, modified by *of girls*, but surely the girls, not the dozens, were doing the chattering. Perhaps one might treat the whole sequence *dozens of girls* as the subject. But if we wish to break the constructions down further, we can attack the problem better after we have considered the whole question of subordination and modification. And what I do there, of course, is to suggest that we have prepositions all right, but we also have postpositions and we'd probably have interpositions. If you want to describe these things by their position, then *of* is an interposition between *dozens* and *girls*, and what it does is to show the relationship between them within the subject, not identify one of them as the subject and the other the modifier of it.

Being verb is the second of these functions. The verb occurs second in most normal English sentences. Actually, we may do better here to borrow a concept from the structuralist and recognize zero in grammar. The conventional statement, of course, postulates in such constructions as I have shown that something is understood. This concept would serve moderately well, but it presents difficulties. What is thought of as missing is not necessarily missing and it may not be very well understood. In *Janet swallowed*, nothing is missing or understood, but there may be. Consider the following: *"Janet," father said, "this is silly. You are going to swallow that oyster." Obediently, Janet opened her mouth. Father dropped the oyster into it, the mouth closed. Janet blinked a few times. We sat entranced. Janet swallowed. Presumably, the oyster went down.*

There is enough grammar between the sentences so that we should probably guess that Janet swallowed the oyster. And hence the oyster as complement is understood. But the oyster may not have gone down. Janet's next move may have been to leave the table hastily so that she could spit out the oyster in private. The fact seems to be that we are here dealing with two words or two uses of *swallowed* — one of which in the conventional terminology is transitive, that is, it requires a complement, not zero, and one which is intransitive and hence requires a zero complement.

We might, of course, employ another concept of grammar incorporation. That is, we could say that in *Janet swallowed* the complement is incorporated within the verb, except that we do not know whether there is anything to be incorporated. Janet may not even have swallowed any saliva. In a sentence like *Help!* the concept that parts of the basic sentence are understood or incorporated works rather better. If *help* is part of a sentence sequence, we are probably justified in assuming that *I* and *want* are understood or incorporated. But if *help* is an imperative part, we cannot be sure. Presumably, then, the subject is *you* or *somebody*, and the complement is probably *me* or *us*.

Subject-Verb-Complement

Thus we shall probably describe more of the constructions in the language if we recognize that the basic sentence in English follows the subject-verb-complement (SVC) pattern, and that in most sentences in adult discourse all three parts are represented by spoken or written locutions, anyone of which may be represented by zero.

Like the subject, the verb is not very difficult to recognize although it may be difficult to define, particularly in the etymological sense in which defining is putting limits to the defined object, as one defines a country by bounding it. We have already seen that in most sentences of two words the verb can be readily recognized, as in *It rained*, *He shouted*. But most sentences contain more than two words. And we have seen also that in many of the longer sentences the line between the verb and the complement becomes obscure, as in *You ought to try to get your father to sign your report card while he is still sober*. In this sentence, the verb begins with *ought* and *card* is surely involved in the complement. But saying just where the verb stops and the complement begins might occasion an extensive argument.

Perhaps we may postulate a working definition something like the following: The verb works with the complement to complete the predication started by the subject. This statement will presume some other assumptions and conclusions which we have already accepted: that the normal order, SVC, is not the only possible order, that either the subject or the complement may appear as zero, and that the verb need not be limited to one word which is verb and nothing else. Remember, I'm using *verb* here not as a part of speech but as *being verbs*. Whatever works in this way I would call verb, and eventually I'll have to get to the place where I'll call some things that you call nouns part of the verb because they are essential in the working of the verb-like portion of the sentence. We should observe also that this is a definition by function. Certain words have the privilege of occurrence that allows them to function as verbs; words like *have*, *off*, and *shall* have the privilege of occurrence within the verbal function. That is, they can work with subjects and complements in predication. Normally, they participate in no other function. Many words, however, may function as verbs and have privilege of occurrence in verbs but may also participate in other functions and have other privileges, such as *subject*, *train*, and *water*.

We could, of course, define each use of a given sound and its associations as a separate word. But to do so would complicate our problem and probably would not clarify it, as we shall see when we come to complements and modifiers. As I am using verb, then, I mean whatever functions as the verb in a given sentence, and not necessarily a word or words which can be recognized by form or by any other device outside the grammatical sequence within which it occurs. Of course, form both actual and hypothetical can be useful as a practical key in recognizing verbs.

We should ask ourselves now whether the function of being verbs can be divided into subfunctions. In inflectional languages, verbs can usually be divided into classes recognizable by form, and these classes can be associated with certain uses. That is, the verb can be arranged in what we call paradigm: *era*, *eras*, *erat*, *eramus*, *eratis*, *erant*. On this analogy, paradigms have been made up for the modern English verb, also, but they are obviously inaccurate and inadequate; and they have been so often proved that we need spend little space demolishing them. In the sentence *I go to school*, *go* is said to be the simple present, but in most contexts it obviously is not. The speaker probably means to imply *I have been going to school for some time* or *I am going to school now and I expect to continue going to school for some time in the future*. A comic book Indian may be expected to say *Me go now*, but this is scarcely the exclusive, the used American form, or even native American English at all.

On the other hand, *go* can also be a future form as in the sentence *I go tomorrow*. Similarly, the imperfect is not the imperfect in *Tom Sawyer whitewashed the fence*. The verb *whitewashed* is not imperfect; presumably Tom thought he was done. On the other hand, the perfect is not usually used for perfected or completed actions, as in *I seem to have been whitewashing fences all my life*. The speaker presumably expects the whitewashing to continue. One can say *I have punched him in the jaw*, which employs the supposed perfect form, but a native speaker would not usually use this form in such a sentence. He would more likely say *I punched*. In the *I-go-to-school* sentence, if the speaker really wanted to say he was on his way to school, he wouldn't say *I go to school;* he would say *I am going to school*.

Similarly, the future is difficult to distinguish from the conditional. *I shall go* is simple future but the future always involves condition. When General Douglas MacArthur said in the Philippines, *I shall return*, he was intending presumably to utter a simple future. And his statement presages a future action which became reality. But he could not know this. The war might have dragged on until after he had retired. He might have been shipped to another theater of war. A Japanese sniper might have shot him the next instant.

If the paradigms of the English verb constructed by a part-of-speech approach, using the analogy of the tenses of Latin, is unsatisfactory, can we devise a better? I suspect that we are not likely to be able to devise a very satisfactory set of paradigms for modern English. I believe it is the nature of the language that we should not be able to do so. I take it to be the nature of an inflectional language that its verb forms constitute a relatively rigid system, and that this system can be described by devising paradigms and fitting forms into them. These paradigms tend toward completeness and regularity within the pattern of the language. If the language declines the verb for person, there will tend to be distinctions for persons in a manner tending toward regularity. If a language tends to cast verbs into the form of actions, you may expect to find something like a tense system labelling these actions, but actions that are essentially timeless will be expressed in verbs having certain irregularities. This is, although all languages will evince irregularity as well as regularity, inflectional grammar tends to promote regularity, and even rigidity.

I suspect that this is not the character in an isolating or synthetic or distributive language, and, accordingly, we should not expect to find it characteristic of modern English, which preserves the ancient inflectional system of Indo-European only partially and has not tended to develop inflectional devices in recent times. That is, this may be what it means to have a distributive grammar or a synthetic grammar.

Objective Description in Grammar

We have a fluid grammar, a flexible grammar, a highly adaptable and subtle grammar, but not a grammar which readily lends itself to objective description. So far as we know, however, order and system are characteristics of all languages even though no languages are entirely orderly or systematic. They all reflect conflicting grammatical tendencies and they may reflect just plain accident. They certainly seem to in the present state of our pitiful ignorance. Then we must seek such order as may be found. We should remind ourselves that the order and system of a language may not accurately reflect the order and system of the same language at an earlier date, particularly in English, which has shifted from a strongly inflected language to a strongly distributive language. We need not be surprised if the basis as well as the details have altered.

And here we need to be sharply on our guard. Grammatical devices are likely to become so overwhelmingly imbedded in the thinking processes of the users of the language that an observer of language readily tends to see the familiar when he should be discovering the unfamiliar. Thus, I immediately become suspicious of myself when I observe that a sense of time or tense which was deeply imbedded in Indo-European seems also to be strong in the modern English verb, even to provide the basic classification. This sort of thing has worked to hamper a good many grammatical statements. The people we well-grounded in Latin tended to see the working of that kind of grammar wherever it could be applied at all, even though they had endeavored to be objective.

To return, then, to the basic subdivisions of constructions which function as verbs, I suggest tentatively that tense may still be primary for English verbal classification. I should propose a basic division into (1) point tense verbs, (2) spread tense verbs, and (3) tenseless verbs. The form *I had gone* is usually point tense; it refers to a designated time prior to another time in the past. So, too, is *I shall have gone* and usually *I shall go.* The so-called historical present (which might better be called narrative present) is also a point tense form as in the following: *He goes quietly to the closet, draws out an old firing piece, tiptoes to the window, and points the muzzle outside.* Now, we might notice that these constructions cannot be certainly identified by form. *Takes* is simple or narrative present, but it seems to have a broader spread in *He takes his time about it, doesn't he?* and would be tenseless in *He always takes his time.*

Verb Tense

Large numbers of modern American verbs evince what I have called *spread tense.* They cover a considerable spread of time, but this spread is firmly limited. For example, simple verbs involving the past do not usually include the future or the present. They tend to be perfect, although this supposed perfected action may be what is called progressive. That is, it may have continued over some time. *I shot my old grandmother* is presumably point time and perfect, but *I shot birds all afternoon* is perfect although clearly not point time. The theoretically perfect forms — those with *have* — tend to suggest continued past action and may even imply present and future, as in *I have been flunking courses all my life.*

Most progressive forms tend to be imperfect and to imply a continuous action as in *I was shoveling off the sidewalk.* This characteristic is to be contrasted to the so-called present progressive, of course, which usually indicates point time in the present. The simple past may be used as a point tense in narrative, as in *Braddock crossed the river and marched blindly into an ambush,* but it is also used to indicate customary past action; that is, it is a spread tense as in the following: *The Indo-Europeans domesticated horses and drank their milk but apparently did not use them as draft animals to plow.*

The forms with *do,* commonly called the emphatic forms, are usually spread tense or tenseless verbs. They can be emphatic, of course, as in *I do love you* but usually are not. They are often used in negative statements as in the example above, and they may indicate continued past action, as in *I did love her.* Most point tense uses with *do* are almost unthinkable, as in *I do chop this chicken's head off.* Many of our very complex verbs result from the need to reduce a past action to a point. At least one difference between *I should have liked to be able to go* and *I should have liked to have been able to go* is that the latter represents point rather than spread tense, although it is so involved that it is not much used and so precise that most speakers would not want to bother with it.

A good many verbs involving the future are spread tense verbs. They involve all the future, and they may involve the present, as in *Don't clean your nails in public.* They may even be mainly concerned with the immediate present which includes the future, as in *Be careful of that radioactive waste.*

Tenseless verbs are extremely common in English. They appear in objective and informative discourse: *Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel* and *The scorpion is an arachnid.* Tenseless verbs are probably the commonest in ordinary speech. *I like ice. Jimmy is devoted to what he calls science. Two and two are four.* Presumably, since these verbs involve both the past and the future, they take the tense form that historically is the present. The verb is usually simple. A form like *I am going* can be tenseless, but it usually is point tense. And even if it is spread tense, which it can be, some modifier usually indicates this fact, as in *At the moment I am going to school,* which, of course, does not mean *at the moment* at all but indicates that the action, in addition to being present, extends only briefly into the past and probably will not extend far into the future.

These applications of form to function are not very sharp, as we have seen. The imperfect can be imperfect but usually it is not, being frequently point tense and frequently tenseless. Similarly, the future, which is often point tense, as in *I shall return,* can also be spread tense, as in *Henceforth, I shall devote my life to my children.*

Of all the so-called tense forms, perhaps the pluperfect is most frequently a point tense and used for this tense only to indicate a time prior to a past time. Even this form, however, may not be sharply point tense. And it may be almost interchangeable with other past forms. I shall not pursue the possibility further, however. To do so would involve extensive study which, as far as I know, has not been made. Even if it had been made, we would not have room for the results here.

We can, however, make some observations which may be reliable. (1) As between form and function in modern English verbs, there is no consistent one-for-one equivalent, that is, it is not to be expected that one form in modern English will have one function nor that one function will be expressed by one form. If this is true, paradigms will probably not be very useful in attempting to order and understand the English verb. (2) The English verb system has undergone extensive changes. These changes include the formation of numerous new forms, *I have not been able to go, I shall expect to go.* They include also the adaptation of old forms to new uses. For example, the old preterit may now be used as a point past verb, a spread past verb, or a tenseless verb. (3) In spite of these changes, the English verbs can still be classified roughly on the basis of tense in the point tense, spread tense, and tenseless verbs. To say that English verbs can be classified only roughly insofar as their function in revealing is concerned is not at all to say that time cannot be accurately expressed in English. Verbs can be used very accurately to reveal time but only within limits is this expression of time involved within the verb itself. Apparently, we rely upon the form of the verb to reveal tense if the form alone will reveal tense adequately. If not, the verb form is used within the range of tense for which it can function. And it is refined to a point or spread to an area of time to whatever extent may be necessary by the addition of modifiers. Notice the following: *The next time I saw her, I told her what I thought of her. Saw* here must be a point tense verb, but it is not so always. Notice the following: *I saw her jab her neighbor with a hat pin. Whenever I went to the movies, I saw her jabbing her neighbor with a hat pin. I saw something deeply Freudian in her proclivity to jab people with hat pins. Saw* can be appropriately a point tense verb (first example), a spread tense verb (second example), or a tenseless verb (third example).

Let us return to a previous example since *saw* unmodified is likely to be a spread tense or a tenseless verb. It requires a modifier to identify it as point tense. Accordingly, the clause includes an identification of point time: *the next time.* We may or may not wish to say that this sentence, which conventionally would be called a verbal, modifies the verb. It seems to modify the subject, *I*, as well, but whatever it may be, we can agree probably to what it is doing: it is determining that *I saw* concerns the point action. In the same sentence, however, *told,* although comparable in form to *saw*, probably does not refer to a point action; if it does, the fact is not very significant. *Told* is presumably spread tense or tenseless here. And we all assume that it is. The *I* of the sentence has been thinking this for a long time. He still thinks it while he tells her, and he presumably thinks so at least as strongly after he has fixed the opinion in his mind by telling her. Of course, the verb may not be tenseless here. But *told* is so strongly suggestive of a tenseless verb that if it is anything else, and if this difference is important, the careful speaker would introduce some sort of modifier to suggest a tense in which the verb is being used, as in *I told her what I then thought of her, I told her what I thought of her at the moment.*

Complements

I want to talk now about complements. Traditionally, a complement acquires its name because it completes the predication about the subject which is started by the verb. And this concept will probably serve us if we add that we should probably consider as complements whatever is needed to complete the verb, granted the purpose of the sentence, provided it cannot be identified plausibly as verb. We should remind ourselves, however, that we have already recognized the principle in this distributive grammar that any word may be expected to function in more than one way at a time. Functionally, complements are perhaps best divided into two sorts: those that use copulative verbs and those that do not.

The second sort of complement is more varied. It introduces an idea or ideas not as closely associated with the subject. The pattern is something like *I love Lucy* in which *I* and *Lucy* are separate individuals. In a sentence as simple as this no problems appear. *Lucy* is complement, the so-called direct object. Some complications of this pattern cause no difficulty; in *I said I loved her,* the complement has become a clause and has its own SVC pattern, but *I loved her* is still a clearly delineated object. The construction becomes complicated in *I gave Lucy my love*, in which the complement becomes compound, the two elements playing somewhat different roles with each being nonsense without the other. *I gave Lucy* and *I gave my love* are both sentences, but not the sentence I tried to write. We have avoided thinking much about this construction by giving it a name. We call a word like *Lucy* an indirect object. This is not a very revealing term. There is nothing indirect about the relationship between *Lucy* and *gave* except that *Lucy* is here functioning differently than does *love* so that if *love* is the direct object, *Lucy* might be called the "not-direct" object, a term that could be etymologized "indirect." Perhaps the important fact is that a word like *Lucy* warrants more revealing description. What is important to say about a word like *Lucy*? How does this word differ in *I love Lucy* and *I gave Lucy my love?* One difference surely is that in the first sentence *Lucy* is a complete complement whereas in the second it is not. It can no longer function as sufficient complement. *I gave Lucy* could be a sentence, but it would have to mean something else; in any event, the grammar would be different. In other words, in the first sentence, *Lucy* is a self-sufficient complement. In the second sentence, it is an interreliant complement, and it raises the question whether this indirect object is a sort of exception or the main division within the complement. The question, of course, is whether such objects are few and exceptional or whether they are many and varied. We might look at a few more candidates: *I gave him a black eye, I gave him up for lost, I made him uncomfortable, I cannot understand his denying my complicity in the affair, I cannot imagine him denying me my complicity in the affair*. Obviously, this could go on indefinitely. The language is replete with these sentences which contain a complement related to the remainder of the sentence. For example, in the last sentence the sense requires that *him denying me* and *complicity* must all be part of an interdependent complement. Now, are all these elements what would be called nouns? In *I made him uncomfortable, uncomfortable* would normally be called a modifier and it does seem to be modifying. But the complement is incomplete without it, and therefore, it is in itself complement. We do not say *I made him* with anything like the meaning above. *Uncomfortable* is not a modifier in the sense that *red* is a modifier in *I made her a red dress*. Well, there's quite a lot of this and you see I've gotten into something pretty complicated. Obviously, we're only picking out certain kinds of complements and calling them complements. And we're dismissing the rest of them as modifiers. There is much more function going on here than we have readily recognized because we mainly have used function just to support our definitions of the parts of speech, when the things couldn't stand up without it. Personally, I found this an exciting business.

I am sorry that we do not have time to examine the last two major functions which can be recognized readily within the working of the language, namely, modifying and showing relationships.

I'm willing to say right now, if anybody should ask me, that I suspect that function, whether it be the most scientific basis for a description of grammar or not, may be the basis that will do us the most good in that it may permit us to show youngsters most readily what is happening in sentences, and hence how to read sentences and how to write sentences. As far as I'm concerned, in the business of most of us grammar is some good only if it helps us to teach youngsters how to use the language.

The Meanings of Words

Words have no fixed meanings; they have the power of designating referents and of stimulating awareness of meaning in individuals. We use words as though they were dippers, the same dippers for everybody, but the stuff that is dipped up with the dipper depends upon the body of stuff from which it is dipped. And when we use words we are always dipping into ourselves.

Charlton Laird, *Thinking About Language* (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 37.

Linguistics

The linguists—both the structuralists and the transformationalists—have criticized traditional grammarians for fitting a language to a grammar instead of fitting the grammar to the language. Dr. DiPietro, a well-known linguist, explains why the linguists have developed new approaches to the analysis, study, and teaching of language and he effectively dispels the fears of those who may have thought that Linguistics was an impenetrable mystery.

ROBERT J. DIPIETRO

Phonology

One of the great tasks facing the linguist has been to separate from the general bulk of traditional grammar that part of it which can be scientifically verified and deductively and inductively tested. One of the first things that he did, of course, is to take from this general understanding of language the basic sounds of the language and the system in which they function. This in turn led to a view of language as a system having layers or structures.

There was a phonological layer (a layer of sound) and also a grammatical layer. The linguist first considered language as a string or combination of sounds in a meaningful pattern, a pattern meaningful to the person who understands the language but not meaningful to the person who doesn't understand the language.

Minimal Pairs

If I should come into the room and start speaking to you in Fulani, a language of Africa, you probably would not understand me. All you would hear would be a hodgepodge of sounds. If you were a linguist, you might sit down and say, "Well, let's see what the meaningful units of sound are in this language." Then you would try to find a set of minimal pairs; that is, you would try to find combinations of sounds in places where they would make a difference in meaning. In English, for example, you might find the two words *pin* and *bin* which have different meanings conveyed by the initial sound of the word. In one case it's a voiceless sound and in the second case it's a voiced sound. Finding enough of these meaningful contrasts will enable you to set up the meaningful units of

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sound. These are called phonemes. *Pill* and *kill* would give you /p/ and /c/ as two different phonemes in the language. You could do it with vowels such as in *feet* and *fit*. *Feet* and *fit* would show you that /iy/ and /i/ were separate vowels.

At one point you would exhaust all the possibilities, and at that point you would have the minimal basic sound units in the language. This does not mean that you could then speak Fulani. It means that you could write down the sounds and that you knew about the patterns of sound in the language. The reason that this knowledge doesn't guarantee an ability to speak the language fluently, or even to understand it, is that there is still another layer remaining — the grammatical layer that underlies this series of sounds.

Complementary Distribution

Another term we should become familiar with is complementary distribution. Complementary distribution is viewing the arrangement of forms in terms of whether or not they can ever occupy the same position. Let's look at this set: *pill, spill, till, still, kill, skill.* We have three phonemes here: the /p/ in *pill* and *spill*, the /t/ in *till* and *still*, and the /c/ in *kill* and *skill*. They are different in sound, aren't they? The /p/ of *pill* is heavily aspirated, the /t/ of *till* is also aspirated but not quite as heavily as *pill*, and the /c/ of *kill* is aspirated. You can classify these slightly different phonemes by the principle of complementary distribution; that is, they complement one another. The /p/ of *pill* is never preceded by an *s*; the /p/ of *spill* is always preceded by an *s*. Any word in the language starting with /p/ is always aspirated. I am not implying that we would ever tell the student anything about complementary distribution, but the term consonant blend which is used to describe such combinations as *sp, st,* and *sk* doesn't do the student any good either because it doesn't say what blend means. What is blending with what? Is *p* becoming *s* or *s* becoming *p*? It seems to me that the teacher should have a technical framework to check off the things that are important to talk about. To the students he would simply say, "Pill!" in front of a piece of paper to show them that more air is expended in saying *pill* than in saying *spill*.

Suprasegmental Phonemes

In English, as well as in many other languages, phonemes are classified either in terms of their being produced in succession one after the other or of their being produced in combination with some other phonemes. Vowels and consonants are segmental, i.e., they can be written down on a piece of paper in succession. Suprasegmental phonemes, which comprise the elements of stress, pitch, and juncture, cannot be segmentalized this way.

English has four levels of stress. In English you may stress a syllable or not; if you stress it, you may stress it according to three different levels of stress. Let me give you an example. Take a word like *elevator*. The syllable *el* certainly is the loudest of all; it has the primary stress. We all probably agree that *va* is the second loudest syllable and that the other two syllables are weaker than either *el* or *va*. *Elevator* shows three levels of stress — *él-ĕ-và-tor*.

If you add another word, such as *operator*, you would have *elevator operator*. The word *operator* by itself would have the same primary stress pattern as *elevator*. When you put them together, however, you can make one of the primary stressed syllables louder than the other one. You can either say *élevator operator* or *elevator óperator*. So, to show that the accented syllable of one word is greater than that of the other words, I usually write a little double mark over the one that's the loudest. I call this sentence stress. The sentence stress is the one that can be shifted around in a sentence.

I̋ went home at two o'clock.
I wen̋t home at two o'clock.
I went home at two o'clőck.

Believe me, sentence stress causes a tremendous learning problem for people studying English as a foreign language who natively speak a language, such as French, which does not have this possibility.

This second stress in English is an important part of our language. It annoys me that some books of versification talk simply about stressed and unstressed syllables without bothering about the levels of stress.

English is a stress-time language. You can take a metronome and equate every primary stress with one beat of the metronome. Having the metronome swing once, you can have the students say a sentence such as *He's a doctor*. A native speaker can say that in one stroke of the metronome. He could also say *He's a good doctor* without rushing to get in the added word. Furthermore, he could even say *He's a very good doctor* in one stroke of the metronome. In other words, the relative number of syllables is not as important as the beat. In a language like Spanish, the number of syllables is more important than the relative loudness, the stress. These three sentences, if said in Spanish, could not be said each within the same time limits. The Spanish speaker takes longer with the longer sentences because he can't shorten the syllables as much as we can in English.

I think it is important to point out that the highest level of stress is the one that is movable within the sentence. As long as you have one word, you only have three levels of stress. But if you have a sentence in which there are several words of unequal length and in which the location of the primary stress can be varied, you may possibly have four levels of stress.

In English we have pitch and stress. The pitch and the last level of stress are associated with what we call intonation in English. Things can be uttered with the same sequence of segmental phonemes but with several different kinds of intonation. Thus you can say, "Good morning!" (very friendly); or you could say, "*Good* morning!" (not so friendly). The layer of intonation colors all of our speech and helps identify us as a personality. It's just as important to understand as the segmentals.

Let's examine some examples of different locations of stress. Charles Hockett, in his book *A Course in Modern Linguistics* (New York, Macmillan Co., 1958) uses this sentence: *He was dancing with the stout major's wife*. Notice what happens when the stress is shifted. *He was dancing with the stőut major's wife. He was dancing with the stout ma̋jor's wife. He was dancing with the stout major's wi̋fe.*

In American English, there are four levels of pitch. We use the numeral 1 to indicate the lowest level and 4 to indicate the highest. *My name is John. What is your name?* We can say both of these sentences with the same intonational contour, the same pitch differences. We start off on a pitch level of 2 in each sentence, go up to 3, and drop down to 1.

2 2 2 3↗1 2 2 2 3↘1
My name is John. What is your name?

The final arrow indicates the trailing off of the voice.

Usually, the central pitch point comes at the same location as the sentence stress in English. The basic question type in English, if it's not a *what*-type question, is usually a 2, 3, 3 rise:

2 2 3–3 ↗
Are you going?

Intonations differ in many ways. They differ from region to region, between men and women, and according to the meaning to be conveyed.

Many jokes are linguistic in nature and depend on stress or juncture. A difference in the juncture can turn *What's that in the road ahead?* into a quite different thought. Jokes of this kind are very well known and occur in just about every language with which I am familiar.

We could go on and on about intonation and phonology, but the structural linguist says that when you go to work on a language, you first work on the phonology; then you work on the grammar. There's probably little reason to talk about phonology in teaching English because the students are native speakers — at least are native speakers of some variety of English. The important thing for you are the grammatical layers, the part that deals with the juxtaposition of form.

Another thing that the structuralist did was to distinguish between what we call prescriptive rules of language and descriptive rules. A prescriptive rule is a rule that tells you what you *should say* in a language, and a descriptive rule is a rule that tells you what people *do say* in a language. This is where a lot of controversy exists in language work.

For non-native speakers, I think the dictionary ought to have every word. For example, the non-native speaker of English wants to know what somebody had said, so he looks it up in the dictionary; and if he doesn't find it and the dictionary calls itself unabridged, he wonders what kind of a dictionary it is. So he goes back to the speaker and says, "Well, you said so-and-so and such-and-such. I can't find it in the dictionary." The speaker replies, "Well, that's not really good English."

The non-native speaker comes to the conclusion that there's good English and there's bad English. The distinction between good and bad in this case is a statement of prescription — you are passing a value judgment on it.

I'm not saying here that we shouldn't pass a value judgment. A teacher of English or of any language, as a matter of fact, has to pass value judgments. He has to direct his students toward certain goals of style, of articulation, of expression for the reason that society in general makes distinctions of language. The English teacher tells his students, "Don't use double negatives. If you use double negatives, you won't be linguistically accepted in the circles that we consider the well-educated circles in this country." Or he says, "Don't say 'ain't'." These are the kinds of value judgments that teachers and people generally make about language.

Apart from those value judgments, however, are the rules that you make up to describe the language. Those are different. The first thing the linguist wants to do when he walks into a group of speakers is to make up the rules that describe the way they are speaking. When he starts, he has no way of knowing what value judgments the natives make about their language. Only later on, after he understands what they do say, can he go about understanding what they should say.

A teacher in a class of pidgin English speakers in the Caribbean would first try to understand what the students were saying; then he would have a better idea of explaining to them what they should be saying. Language mistakes follow patterns. If your student says *ain't*, he probably says *ain't* in a certain way, in a certain pattern. If he says *me* after *it is*, he probably also says *him, her*, and all the other object forms after this pattern. If he uses the third person singular verb formula *has* for *I has*, he probably does it for all the persons — *they has, we has* — thus regularizing it all the way through. An understanding of what he does, I think, helps a great deal in deciding how to explain to him what he should be saying in order to be accepted as an educated person.

Teachers of English (or of any language) in organizing their classes have to be aware of all the aspects of language.

Morphology

For the structuralists, each language has a layer of structures. Each has a layer of phonology (sound) and a layer of grammar. The structuralist sees parallelisms in the pattern, the phonological pattern with the grammatical pattern. If the phonology has as its unit the phoneme, the grammar has as its unit the morpheme. As the phoneme is the smallest significant unit of sound, so a morpheme is the smallest unit of form having meaning in a language. The *ing* of *going* is certainly a morpheme because it has a meaning all by itself. We don't even have to say what the meaning is; all we have to do is recognize that it has a different meaning or it has a meaning of its own. In morphology, we don't have to say specifically what it is. All we have to say is that it has a unique meaning. When you get into semantics, you can talk about what its meanings are.

There may be two or more morphemes in a word. In other words, if I give you a recording of a sentence, you can analyze it as a string of phonemes, their arrangement. You can also analyze it as a string of morphemes with their kind of arrangement. According to the structuralist, language has layers. It's like looking at a piece of cake that has been cut so that you can see the layers. It's still one cake but it has different layers and you can talk about the filling or the top layer or the lower layer, but it's still one piece.

You have situations in which one morpheme is correlated to two completely different sounds — like *rows* and *oxen*. In this case, *row* is a separate morpheme, *ox* is a separate morpheme. *Z* forms the plural of *rows* and *en* forms the plural of *ox*. By my inference, therefore, *en* and *z* are the same morpheme. We call them allomorphs of the same morpheme class. You also have situations with two completely different morphemes that would be correlated to the same sound. You have examples of this in *the book's cover* and *the ten books*. One is possessive and the other, plural. If you have possession plus plurality, they're both correlated to one sound even in one sequence.

This idea of a morpheme as a basic unit of meaning is important in describing the grammar of a language. Morphology is a statement of the forms which the morphemes take in the grammatical units of a language; syntax is a statement of their arrangements. You can say that the word *roses* is two morphemes. There's a morpheme *ros* and the morpheme *-s*, which means plural, and the syntax of these two morphemes is the syntax of suffixation, which is the syntactical process by which they are joined together.

The system of phonology and the system of grammar — the morphology and syntax of a language — are separate systems. One, in a sense, lies on top of the other one, but their patterning is different.

Let us take as the grammatical core of a language the following: (a) parts of speech, (b) grammatical categories, (c) construction types.

Parts of Speech

We know that parts of speech are nouns, pronouns, verbs, etc. What we want to discuss here is the definition of parts of speech as a class, as a set. First, all of these parts of speech are stems; they carry semantic meanings. What classifies a set of stems as a specific part of speech is its common syntactical and morphological behavior; that is, a part of speech is a class of stems whose members have the same morphological and syntactical arrangement or distribution. A class of words can be defined as verbs if they're all inflected for tense. In other words, they all have the same morphological behavior. Adjectives can't be classified as verbs because they don't get inflected for tense.

In English, a distinction is made between such parts of speech and the function or structure words. The parts of speech of English are rather simple and few in number. They are limited to nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs. Such things as prepositions, coordinators, and subordinators, which are traditionally called parts of speech, have been put in classes of function or structure words by today's linguists. A very important reason for doing this is that, in speaking English, nobody really knows all of the members of all of the parts of speech. No one knows every noun in *The Oxford Dictionary* nor does anyone know every verb in English. It is not necessary to know every noun or every verb to speak English, but it is necessary to know every preposition, to know every conjunction, to know every subordinator. It is very difficult to speak English without knowing the preposition *in*, *at*, *to*, or *of*, although it is certainly conceivable that one could speak English for a year without necessarily using a noun such as *escalator*.

Function words are like traffic signals, and parts of speech are like automobiles. Function words direct the traffic of the parts of speech. They point which way the nouns are going, which way the verbs are going.

Grammatical Categories

The term grammatical categories refers to the particular kind of grammatical distinction that a language makes. In English, for example, we make a grammatical distinction of tense. We have past tense and present tense. We make a distinction of number. We have singular and plural. We do not make a distinction of gender grammatically. We make a distinction of gender semantically. We don't do what Latin does with its three classes of nouns nor what French does with its two. We have a grammatical category of person in the pronoun set only — *I*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *it*, and so forth; we don't have it anywhere else. We make a case distinction in English only in the pronouns and in the possessive case of nouns. We don't have a dative or accusative case, an ablative, or a vocative. And in the pronoun set, we only have a three-way contrast: a nonobjective case, a possessive case, and an objective case. We have *we*, *our*, and *us*. That's all we have.

Construction Types

The third part of the grammar core are the construction types. This part has to do with the way things are put together, the way sentences are made, and the kind of syntactical arrangements that the language has.

Constructions in English belong to two major types, the centered type and the uncentered type. Linguists who like Greek derivatives call the centered ones endocentric and the uncentered ones exocentric.

The centered constructions contain a logical center along with an attribute or a series of attributes. In standard English, attributes are of two types in the same construction. If they're single attributes, they usually come before the center (*big house*, *white house*, *yellow bird*). If they are clausal or phrasal, that is, if they contain more than just a single stem, they usually follow (*The man who came to dinner*). *Who came to dinner* is an attribute to *man*. *The man that I saw yesterday* — *that I saw* is an attribute to *man*. Single stem attributes in English only rarely follow the noun, as in *House Beautiful*, in *Operation Crossbow*, in *courts martial*. This sort of thing occurs in English but is not as common as putting the attribute before the noun.

There are three types of exocentric or uncentered constructions that Hockett lists as directive, connective, and predicative. A directive type has a director and an axis as its immediate constituents, as, for example, in the prepositional phrases *in the box, on the table*, or in the constructions *if he is going, while we were there*.

A connective type would contain a connector and a predicate attribute in such examples as *became excited, is a big man*, and the very interesting one *He lay in the corner motionless. Lay in the corner* connects *motionless* to *he. The child grew sickly* and *The child grew quickly. Quickly* is an attribute to *grew* and is, therefore, not a connective type. In *The child grew sickly, sickly* does not describe the growing of the child; therefore, it is not a modifier of *grew* but of *child* and is linked to *child* by *grew*. We call *grew* a connector and *sickly* a predicate attribute.

A predicative type would have a topic and a comment with a structure such as *That man, I just don't like*. I think this topic-comment type is the one that you are going to be most concerned with, because this type of structure has been expanded in certain kinds of English. In *My mother, she upstairs, My mother* is the topic, *she upstairs* is the comment. We won't accept that particular arrangement in standard English, even though it fits an acceptable structure such as *That man, I just don't like. My mother, she upstairs*, although it follows the same structure, is not acceptable unless you use a particular kind of intonation and then put in a linking verb — *My mother, she's upstairs*. This revised form wouldn't be in the same context as it was used in its original form, the one that we won't accept.

Only when we have more than one morpheme can we talk about a construction type, because construction types are concerned with the way two or more morphemes are put together. The largest construction type that we have in English is a sentence. We talk about the paragraph in writing. There is no way of linguistically defining a paragraph. Linguistically, we can define a sentence as a form bounded by an intonational contour: 2, 3, 1; 2, 3, 3; and the terminal contour. A linguist trying to define a paragraph would search for a sequence of construction types to follow.

Is there any formal mechanism that a paragraph has that a sentence doesn't have? You might say that people speak in paragraphs. I don't think they do. I think they write — organize things — in paragraphs. We try to say semantically that there's some unification of thought, yet one person's unification of thought might not be another's. It is my opinion that paragraph and chapter are written forms, forms that look good on a page. A style sheet from one publisher tells authors not to write short paragraphs. If there were some formal way to define a paragraph, the length of a paragraph could not be so arbitrarily legislated. There is no unit larger than the sentence with which the linguist can cope. He can cope with a sentence because he can talk about the structure of a sentence, but he is unable to go beyond that.

Inflection and Derivation

Linguists try to make a distinction between inflection and derivation. Inflection is the manipulation of stems by means of function morphemes like *-ing*, *-s*, and *-ed*. Derivation is the formation of stems.

Derivation occurs when you take a word like *hostile* and add *ity* to it because you're making another stem out of an original stem. If you form the plural of *hostility*, you would not be making another stem. You would be inflecting the stem. In order to establish whether a form is a stem, you must test the form to see if it can occur by itself. Any word that can't stand by itself will be called either a prefix or a suffix depending on where it occurs with another form.

In words like *reconsider* and *relocate*, *re* is definitely a prefix because we cannot say it unless it is attached to the other words.

When you come to words like *relieve* and *receive*, you think you have the same form *re*, but you don't. When you cut *re* off, you come up with forms that make no sense by themselves — *ceive, lieve*. If the *ceive* of *receive* has a meaning as a morpheme, then it should have the same meaning in the word *deceive*; but there isn't any central theme of meaning. Of course, they do come from the same historical source. One thousand years ago, they probably were separate morphemes; now, they have fallen together and it makes no sense to break these verbs down into separate morphemes.

This brings us to a very fine point in linguistic theory — the difference between a purely synchronic analysis of language and a diachronic analysis. The synchronic analysis deals with language as it is right now. The diachronic analysis of language deals with language as to how it developed into what it is today. Diachronically, the *ceive* of *receive* and *deceive* are the same morphemes; synchronically, they are not. *Reconsider* is to *consider* again. *Report* is not to *port* again; *reduce* is not to *duce* again. Very often, English teachers mix diachronic analysis with synchronic analysis. I'm suggesting here that we keep the two analyses separate. Teach first the detachable prefixes as being a tool in modern English; and then if you want to go into the history of these words, you can do it as a separate kind of performance. When you discuss *report, reduce, receive,* and *retain,* the student eventually says, "Well, isn't that the same *re* that we had in *reconsider?*" And you say, "Well, it used to be, but it isn't anymore because we don't say *ceive* anymore. In fact, we can't even find the same meaning for *ceive* in *receive* and *deceive*. The *ceive* part has shades of meaning, which have become different morphemes."

Let me give you some other examples of derivational endings which are really nasty ones to work out. Take the suffix — or whatever you want to call it — *ster.* We have *youngster,* we have *oldster. Youngster* is one who is young, *oldster* is one who is old. We have, then, a complete parallelism of adjectives plus *ster* — *ster* meaning *one who is.* But then we come across *teamster* — one who is *team?* That doesn't work. One who belongs to a *team?* That doesn't work either. One who drives a *team?* That one works; now we look around for other parallels and we come upon *mobster. Mobster* isn't one who drives a *mob.* He is a member of a *mob.* In *mobster* the *ster* means *one who is a member of.* This takes us back to *youngster.* Do we say *youngster* is a member of *young?* It is very difficult to find a thread of continuity here.

How about *spinster?* One who spins? Historically, one who was a spinster was one who spun, but it doesn't mean that anymore. We might end up saying that there are various *sters.* Just to further show how difficult it is, we can bring in a few more words — *lobster, sister, huckster.*

The derivational suffix *-ster* shows that a study of how stems are derived can be complex.

Morphemes, then, can either be derivational or inflectional depending on what operation they perform in the language. By derivation we refer to making new stems. In derivation, we may or may not change the form-class membership. We may make another noun from a noun or we may make it into a verb, or an adjective from a noun. Inflection never changes the form-class membership of a stem; it adds function morphemes so the stems can be used in constructions.

Structural Syntax

Among linguists there are many schools of thought on how to analyze language and how to evaluate the analysis. In a sense there hasn't been any adequate way of saying that either the transformational or the structural analysis of grammar is the one that's most appropriate for teaching English. I suppose that eventually, after a lot of careful work, some particular way will come to the fore as being the most adequate.

The two kinds of approaches to language analysis are generally called taxonomic or operational. Both refer to linguistic descriptions.

A linguist of the taxonomic approach reports the language the way a biologist describes a kind of animal. This linguist says, for example, that German has three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter. It has a set of strong verbs and weak verbs, and so on. In other words, he describes the structure of German. These are taxonomic rules.

An operational model of German would be one in which I could give you a set of rules on the basis of which you could produce new sentences in German. I might say to you, for example, that in German a certain kind of sentence has a noun as the first element followed by a verb as the second element. Then I give you a list of nouns and a list of verbs followed by a direct object, another noun of a certain class, and still another set of nouns. If you select something from each one of these lists and put them in their proper slots in this structure, you create German sentences of one kind. This is a very simple example of what I mean by an operational model.

The transformationalists are primarily operational in their orientation. They look at language as a functioning system, like a machine they work. They turn on the ignition of their cars and something happens to make the wheels turn. The taxonomist looks at the language as he might look at the engine in a static condition. He looks at the engine as a combination of arrangements of bolts and nuts and gears and screws and wires and things. He takes it all apart and he puts it all together. The operationalist is more interested in describing the action that goes through the engine whereas a taxonomist's rules describe the engine in its arrangements.

Owen Thomas, in his book *The Transformational Grammar and the Teacher of English* (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1965), uses the light switch in his analogy describing the taxonomist and the operational grammarian. The taxonomist describes the light switch in the state of being on or off; the operationalist describes it in terms of the motion from on to off or in terms of how it goes on and off. I might add that linguistic theories are moving more and more toward the operational type, even the ones that call themselves taxonomic.

One of the outstanding contributions of structural grammar is the view of language as being put together in layers. And one of the things we talk about in terms of layers is the way structures or constructions are put together into sentences. Traditional grammar with its diagramming of sentences had already started to do this.

Consider a sentence such as *He was shot in the war* and the sentence *He was shot in the leg*. Superficially those two sentences seem to be built by the same construction. We might say that they are both made up of a subject and a predicate type of thing or maybe a directive type of construction. Then *in the war* would be a prepositional phrase with *in* as a kind of director, *war* as an object or axis. And you'd do the same thing with *in the leg*. Or, on the other hand, would you try to make a distinction between the way this piece *in the leg* and this piece *in the war* are connected to what precedes them? Would there be a way for you to show that *in the war* and *in the leg* were connected to what precedes by different constructions? The construction type, we feel, is different.

To show that these are different kinds of construction, we could do something very simple with *He was shot in the leg* and *He was shot in the war*. All we have to do is to insert *in the war* in the other sentence. *John was shot in the leg in the war*. You can't say *John was shot in the war in the leg*, can you? If the two elements were really the same construction, then you shouldn't be able to do that. But the fact that you can put one in before the other one proves that they are, indeed, different kinds of constructions.

Let's use a diagram to examine the sentence *He kissed her hand*. (See Fig. 1.)

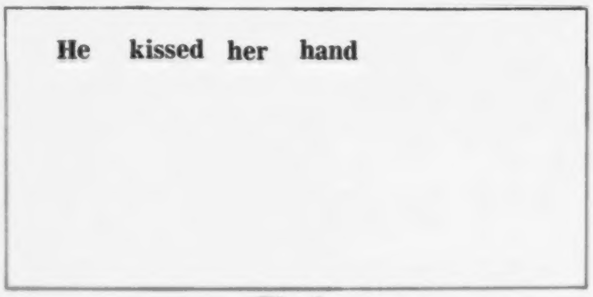

Fig. 1

Our diagram will be like that little branch-type diagram that is used in traditional grammar except that it's more consistent and you have to identify the relationships of each piece. Usually the way Nelson Francis and Charles Hockett and the structural linguists do it is to draw a big box, and the whole sentence is put in it. Now this big box is going to contain lots of little boxes which are like Chinese boxes — you know, where you open one box and there's another box inside. You open that one and there might be two inside. You open one of these two and there might be nothing inside of the first, but there might be another one inside of the second. Let's draw this line here to show this is one box. (See Fig. 2.)

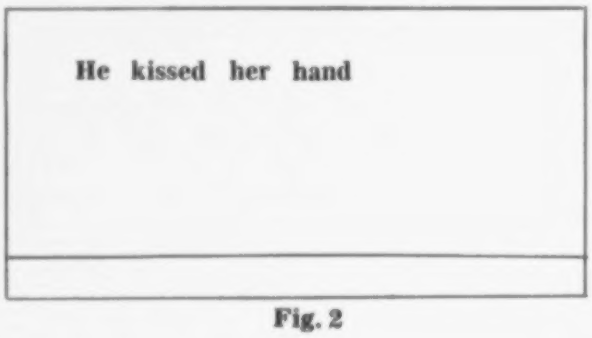

Fig. 2

The next box might contain another box which contains the subject *He* and the predicate *kissed her hand*. We're finished with the box containing *He*. (See Fig. 3.)

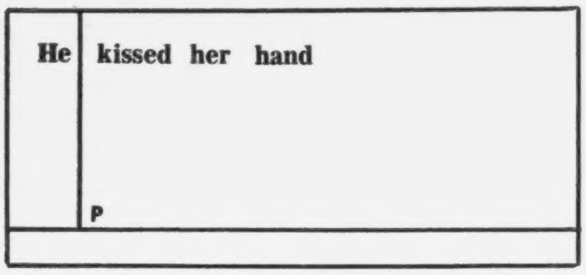

Fig. 3

So then you look at this one and you open it and you find two more boxes, one of them containing *kissed* and another one *her hand*. (See Fig. 4.)

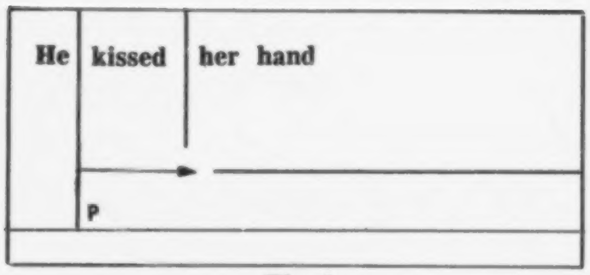

Fig. 4

You open the box in the center and you find two more, one of them containing the inflection, past tense. (See Fig. 5.) You open the one on the far right and you find two more; then you have completed your immediate constituent analysis. (See Fig. 6.)

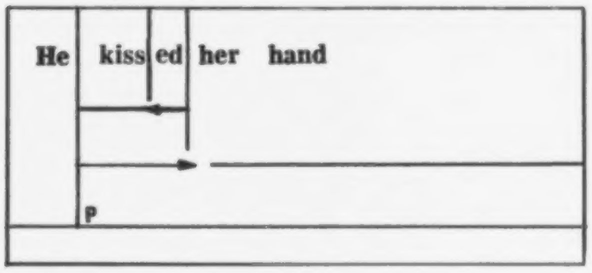

Fig. 5

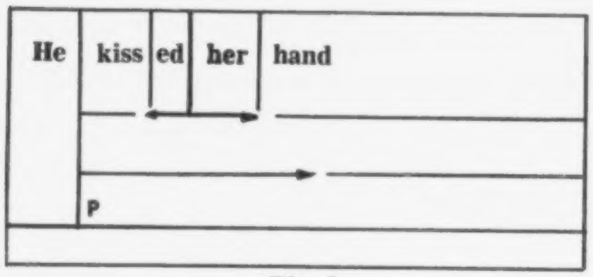

Fig. 6

Now you have to go back and identify the relationship that each piece has to the other. For example, one relationship here is the predicative type. You could write a little *p*. The symbols here aren't important. In *kissed her hand* you have to define the relationships of the verb to what follows; you might want to call it a directive type, and you use a little arrow to indicate it. Then, you are left with *her hand*. This type of structure is what we call a centered construction because there is a piece of it, the *hand* part, which operates as a kind of fulcrum around which you could build other things. You could say, *He kissed her little hand, He kissed her cold, little hand . . . pretty, cold, little hand*. You can keep building and *hand* always remains the center of the construction. It's always the central piece. So we draw a little arrowhead towards the center with the point of the arrowhead always pointing towards the center. *Kissed* in a sense is also a center construction, but *ed* is satellite to the center which is *kiss*. So we draw the arrowhead with the point going the other way.

Basically, we have only two kinds of constructions. We have the centered, the ones in which you can find some kind of center around which you can build constructions, and the uncentered type which have no center.

The construction *all that fresh milk on the table* is a centered construction, because by the time you break down all the pieces, all the immediate constituents, you end up with a word like *milk* around which you build everything else. A construction like *across the street* is not a centered construction because you can't build around any part of it the way you can build around *all that fresh milk on the table*. However, if you took the expression *across the street* and took off the word *across* and had just *the street*, you would indeed have another centered construction, because then you could say *across the wide street, across the old street, across the gravelly street.*

The structural grammarian reacts against the traditional grammarian who would say that in *All that fresh milk on the table is good* the subject is *milk*. The structural linguist, thinking of these layerings we have just investigated, would say, "No, no, no! The subject is *All that fresh milk on the table*." Then he'd break that down and get smaller pieces until he eventually comes to the word *milk*. He looks at language as one piece inside of another piece, whereas the traditional grammarian goes right to the center piece, takes that out, and calls it the subject.

You can also reverse the procedure in I.C. (immediate constituent) analysis. Rather than start with the big piece, you can start with the little pieces and go the other way. It comes out the same, only you use a different kind of diagram. If we use *He kissed her goodnight,* we would start with the closest relationships and go to the most remote ones, rather than starting with the most remote ones and going to the closest ones. The closest ones here would be between *ed* and *kiss*; and then between *good* and *night*; and then between *kissed her goodnight*; and finally between *he* and everything else. (See Fig. 7.)

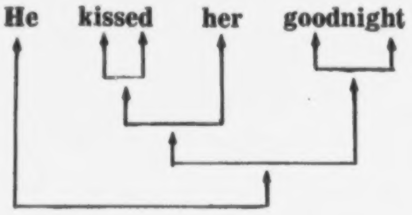

Fig. 7

Transformational Syntax

How does the transformational way of looking at a language differ from the way the structuralist looks at language? The structuralist looks at language as an arrangement of units laid out on a table top — the gears, the wires, if you wish, everything that is part of the language. The transformational or the generative grammarian looks at language from another point of view: he wants to know how sentences are produced and recognized.

The structuralist could never accept as part of his analysis the relationship of *The wine was drunk by John* to *John drank the wine* because, in order to relate the two sentences, you have to bring in some kind of analysis that involves moving from one state to another state — in this case, from an active to a passive sentence. The structuralist says, "We're looking at language as arrangement, as arrangement of units in a pattern; therefore, *The wine was drunk by John* is one pattern and *John drank the wine* is another pattern. They really have, as far as we're concerned, little to do with one another."

This brings us to the matter of how adequate is a linguistic theory. The transformationalist says, "Structuralists are not coming up with an adequate theory. They don't explain enough of the language. Certainly, language may be looked at in terms of patterns and arrangements, but that isn't enough. Language also involves the ability of the speaker to create new sentences."

The structuralist says, "Aren't the transformationalists being very impressionistic when they talk about how a person creates a language? Isn't that too mystical an approach? If we're scientists, shouldn't we work with the accomplished deed, with the sentence as it has been uttered, with something tangible?"

This argument goes on and on; however, I think more and more people are moving toward, if not a generative transformational model, at least some kind of model of language which has operations in it, some kind of motion or activity in it. Whether they call it transformation or not is beside the point. The latest thinking seems to indicate that we should include operations in descriptions of languages. Transformational theory has probably developed more rapidly than any other theory in linguistics. In about ten years, a wealth of material has been written on transformational grammar.

For the transformationalist, language is an immense machine. You start at one end with the basic raw materials and out of the other end comes a string of sounds which is language. It's the linguist's job to explain what happens in between, to explain how the language is produced.

A grammar can be generative without being transformational. If a set of transformational rules is introduced into the theory, the description of the grammar can be made shorter.

Let us take a quick look at a schematic to see how transformational rules are correlated to generative rules.

(1) S → NP + VP
(2) NP → Det + N
(3) VP → V + NP
(4) N → man, boy, girl, woman
(5) V → sees, likes
(6) Det → the

We began with what we call a sentence in English, and we took what just about every transformational or generative grammarian takes as the first rule: a sentence is a noun phrase plus a verb phrase (1). Now we must rewrite each element to the right of the arrow. Noun phrase is determiner optionally plus noun (2). I am making these rules very simple at this point. Verb phrase is verb plus noun phrase (3). Noun is *man, boy, girl, woman* (4). In rewriting verb for a specific grammar, we would probably write verb plus number, plus person or tense, or plus whatever we would want to show in the verb set. In order to simplify at this point, we shall rewrite verb as *sees, like* (5). Let's put in one determiner, *the* (6).

Let's draw our little tree diagrams and see what happens. (See Fig. 8.)

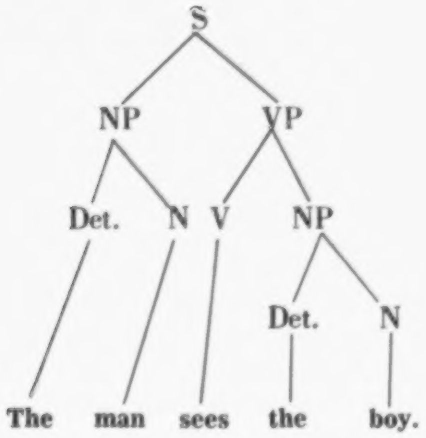

Fig. 8

We could also have had a sentence, *The man sees the man, The boy sees the man, The boy sees the girl, The girl sees the man, The woman sees the man, The man sees the woman,* etc., until all of the possibilities are exhausted. By having simply four nouns and two verbs, we have explained quite a number of English sentences. If we increase the classes in Rules 4 and 5, the possibilities are further increased greatly.

The generative grammarian says, "This demonstrates the power of my description of the language. I can explain all these sentences." What resulted from this first approach to the analysis of a sentence according to phrase structural rules is a surface tree. The transformationalist agrees but goes on to say that if you want to explain sentences like *The girl is seen by the man* or *The girl is liked by the man,* you have to write more rules. Eventually he has to apply the transformations in understanding the sentence or in creating the sentence, and when he does that, he ends up with the deep structure of the sentence.

In the deep grammar, ambiguities of structure are resolved. *The shooting of the hunters* would produce one surface tree. There are also two deep grammar trees that would be a transform of *the hunters that shoot* with an imbedded sentence: the first would be *hunters shoot, hunters that shoot*; and the other one would be *people that shoot hunters.* In order to explain this difference, you would have to talk about the embedding, which you would do in the deep grammar, not in the surface grammar. The surface grammar would simply be the first analysis that you do in the sentence without reference to the transformational rules, but only with reference to the phrase structural rules.

Emmon Bach, in *An Introduction to Transformational Grammars* (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964), gives examples of structurally ambiguous sentences. *The committee's appointment was a surprise. I just can't see flying kites. John feels cold. He's crazy to go to Cuba.* Very often, even out of context, we would interpret these statements one way and that would be the end of it. If we apply the deep grammar rules of embedding and transformation, however, we come to realize that they are ambiguous.

For *The committee's appointment was a surprise* one set of rules would produce *the appointment of the committee* (meaning: that the committee was appointed was a surprise), the other set would produce *the committee appointed* (meaning: the appointment made by the committee was a surprise).

Ambiguity is shown here by the fact that there is more than one underlying analysis. We have not shown which one was meant; we have shown that there are two possibilities.

There are two sets of grammars you have to write. You have to write a forward grammar in which you start with the kernel rules, the noun-phrase, verb-phrase rules and you move toward all your transformations and your final sentences. The forward grammar is the productive type. There is also the receptive type in which you take the final sentence and reverse the procedure. It's called the reverse grammar because you go back to get to the kernel. This is harder to do than going forward because there are more rules since you have to try all possibilities. If we had a sentence like *The wine was drunk by midnight,* we might say that it looks like a passive sentence. We apply in reverse the passive transformation and end up with *midnight drank the wine.* We apply the phrase structural rules and it comes out in a different part of speech. We junk the whole thing and try something else. Eventually we work out the underlying tree. That's working from the finished sentence and going back to the kernel. It's much easier to start with the kernel rule and write out the sentence, which is what we do when we speak; but when we hear, we reverse the procedure. When we speak or write, these ambiguities do not really exist. It's the listener or reader who is puzzled by the ambiguities.

The transformationalist with his trees and diagrams very often feels close to the traditional grammarian. The transformationalist is rigorous and formal in his diagraming, whereas the traditionalist is not. The traditional grammarian never formally specifies why you should select one diagram over another one; the transformationalist is now attempting to make this explicit. He is attempting the traditionalist's technique, but he is being more rigorous and more formal in applying it.

Operational Definitions: Traditional, Structural, Transformational

Item I: Hen or Egg?

The linguist insists that the only language is what you speak and that writing is a representation of this language. The usual linguistics textbooks point out that language has been with human beings as long as they've been human beings — maybe a million years. Writing is no older than 7,000 (maybe 8,000) years. Writing really never represents all of language — just parts of it — so that as far as the linguist is concerned, writing is a reflection of language. A grammar developing and explaining the written system of a language can, of course, be developed, but the important components of morphophonemics, phonology, and intonation would have to be left out. If a separate grammar for the written variety of the language is developed, a set of rules that explain how this written grammar is different from the real grammar of the language must also be developed. If this is not done, the language described will be misrepresented.

Item II: Grammar or the Grammar of One Language?

Both the structuralist and the transformationalist recognize that a language has its own unique system. The traditionalist who writes a grammar which explains Hungarian or German but looks very Latin is attempting to associate the structure of his language with that of Latin. Latin grammar works very well for Latin but not for other languages.

The more traditionally inclined person says, "Well, every language has nouns; it has names of persons, places, and things just as we do in English." Of course, this may be true but the nouns in one language may turn up as affixes or in the middle of words. Here is the weakness of viewing grammar as something existing apart from any specific language. The language is fitted to the grammar, the important contrasts often being disguised as exceptions and hidden in footnotes.

Item III: What's a Rule For?

The structuralist talks about language in terms of patterns, whereas the transformationalist has a rule or a series of rules showing how utterances are interrelated. The structuralist will not operate his analysis unless he has something that has been said. The transformationalist, on the other hand, has a set of rules which produces sentences. He produces a sentence and then asks, "Can this sentence be said in the language?"

The traditional grammarian sets up a rule and then if a particular construction does not fit that rule, he labels it an exception. The transformationalist takes the language first and formulates the grammar to fit the language, whereas the traditionalist very often has an idea, an absolute definition of grammar, and then fits the language to the grammar.

Traditional grammar may make some statement of rules for the placement of modifiers. It may state, for example, that prepositional phrases follow the nouns they modify, as in *the big, red house on the corner.* But the same grammar may define *on the corner* as an adjective phrase. Here is one of the big problems of traditional grammar, mixing the form and the function. The form of *in the corner* is a prepositional phrase. Its function is as an attribute.

In the sentences *John is happy there*, *John is happy today*, and *John is happy quietly*, the words *there*, *today*, and *quietly* would be, for the traditional grammarian, adverbs; but the third sentence isn't English. It ought to be *John is quietly happy*. The linguist, therefore, cannot put *there*, *today*, and *quietly* in the same category. *Quietly* is not in the same form class as *there* and *today* because it cannot, like them, go after *happy*. Any such formal criterion the teacher of English can bring from linguistics to separating parts of speech or form classes is good. It gives the student a foothold in grammar, something he can cling to that is formal rather than something that is just meaningful.

Another example of such a formal distinction in English is the use or the nonuse of the definite article in phrases such as *in school* and *in the school*, *at school*, and *at the school*. If one says, "He's in school," he means something quite different from "He's in the school." The traditionalist calls them all prepositional phrases. What linguists, structural and transformational, do is to tie the distinction between the two types of phrases to the use or the nonuse of the definite article, a formal distinction.

Item IV: What's a Sentence?

The structuralist and transformationalist can, if they wish, describe run-on sentences and fragments. The transformationalist can write a rule that produces double negatives. In cases such as these, I believe that the teacher has to be prescriptive.

The teacher of English rejects run-ons and fragments, I think, because of a value judgment that we all make about the language. I think that it's a good value judgment but I don't think it's necessarily anything linguistic. We use run-ons in speech which are acceptable because of their intonational contours. Linguists, structural and transformational, are certainly aware of intonation.

To the traditional grammarian who defines a sentence as a group of words which convey a complete thought the linguist says, "Fine, that's what it is but that's not specific enough. You must be more detailed in saying what kind of group of words."

The structuralist says, "A sentence is a group of words bounded by an intonation." Now he has a unit that he can work with.

The transformationalist says a sentence is a noun phrase plus a verb phrase. He's got a definition with which he can work.

Item V: How Do They Handle Expansion?

The concept of expansion in the structural and the transformational approaches can be compared to the traditional way of talking about expansion in grammatical forms.

Let us take a phrase like *red house* and work with it as would a structuralist. We would first break it into its immediate constituents and talk about *red* as being a modifier of *house*. Then, if we introduce the idea of other structures that would be related to this sort of structure — *red house* — a certain amount of layering would occur.

What other structures could we build around the nucleus of *red house*? We could expand it to *big, red house*. What is the relationship of *big* to the rest of the structure? Does the immediate constituent cut go first *big* and then *red house* in relationship here? This is the way I would analyze it anyway — *big, red house*. (See Fig. 9.)

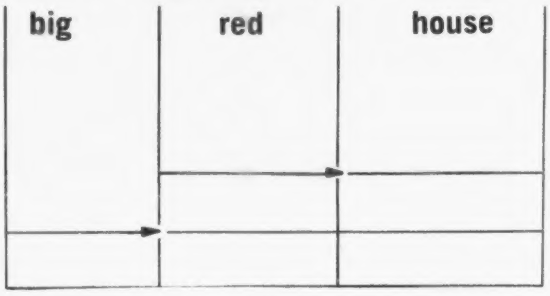

Fig. 9

Suppose we had a form like *big, old, red house*. Would it be *big — old, red house*, would it be *big, old — red house*, or would it be *big, old, red — house*? The layering, of course, would vary according to the meaning. This is building on a particular structure. We could also build it the other way — *big, red house on the corner*. We have another I.C. that would break down into *on* and *the corner*. *The corner* breaks into *the* and *corner* with the attribution going to *big, red house*. (See Fig. 10.)

As long as we can go on expanding the construction around one center — in this case, *house* — we would be dealing with a centered construction. We have here the expansion of a centered construction, and this is

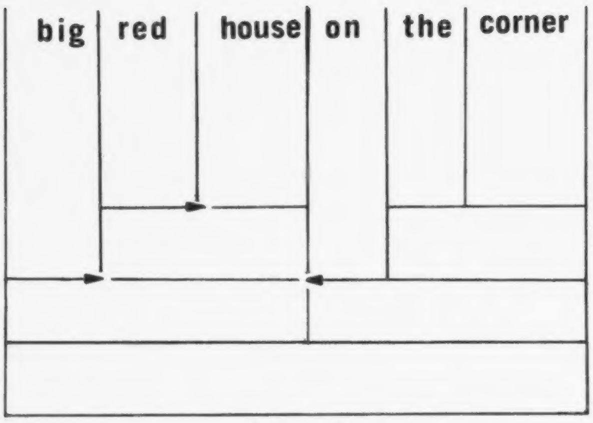

Fig. 10

what the structuralist means normally when he talks about expansion. He talks about putting in more attributes or modifiers but keeping the same center to the construction. So, therefore, expansion and modifications with the structuralist are synonymous when they deal with nominals. When they deal with verbs (*go, is going, was going, will be going, might have been going*), the term modification does not fit.

Now let's look at the way a transformationalist explains expansion. What device might he use to talk about *big, red house on the corner?* The different ideas would have to be embedded. What, then, are some of the patterns that the transformationalist would introduce? *The house is big, the house is old, the house is red, the house is on the corner.* He would take all those kernel sentences, apply to them a series of ordered embedding rules in order to produce this sentence.

big red house on the corner

(1) S → NP + VP
(2) NP → Det + N
(3) VP → V + PA (predicate attribute or prep. phrase)
(transformation) N + V + PA ⇒ PA + N
The house is big ⇒ The big house
The house is red ⇒ The red house
The house is on the corner ⇒ The on the corner house

The rules numbered 1, 2, and 3 explain the construction. After writing those three rules, we transform noun plus verb plus predicate attribute to predicate attribute plus noun. That's our transformational rule. *The house is big* is transformed to *the big house.* We have three embedded sentences which have undergone this transform.

The traditionalist may approach expansion in various ways. He may talk about inserting things in a structure, but he is not specific in telling how he inserts them — whether he adds them on in layers or whether he inserts them in terms of rules. For the traditionalist, expansion probably involves all kinds of insertion. In a sense, then, he is more closely allied to the transformational point of view without showing specifically how it operates, how it functions.

The traditionalist may also take a semantic point of view and say that expansion involves giving a clearer and clearer picture of the basic kernel.

Language Is What People Make It

As times have changed, language too has changed to meet the needs of each generation. It is just as wrong to speak of "decay" of language as to see in it an inevitable progress. Language is what people make it. In every generation there are those who use it skilfully and those who use it clumsily; those who use it honestly and those who use it corruptly. The final lesson of its history is that not only poets and scholars, but ordinary citizens as well have a hand in shaping the language of their own time. This is our privilege and our responsibility.

W. Nelson Francis, *The History of English* (New York, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963), p. vi

Dialectology and Usage

Dr. Shuy argues that dialect involves more than just words and that many of us speak different dialects depending on the situation in which we find ourselves. He cites the causes of dialect differences and shows how "good" or "bad" usage is affected by historical, psychological, and sociological principles, all of which indicates in Dr. Shuy's opinion that English teaching should aim for many styles of English rather than just one.

ROGER W. SHUY

Last year I interviewed people in a shopping center in Lansing, Michigan, to get an idea of what people think a dialect is. Here is a selection of the responses I recorded:

"A dialect is something like Chinese."

"A dialect of speech is one that determines which communities are separated from other communities: Asia, Europe, the South."

"Dialect means usage — not the way the language is supposed to be."

"Dialect is the same language spoken in a different manner."

"Dialect is the local style of pronouncing a word."

Almost all of the people to whom I spoke about dialects spoke negatively about them. One girl, in fact, said that dialect is the way a language is not supposed to be. Lack of certainty about language, in this case about dialect, is obvious.

One of the best definitions given by the people in the shopping center in Lansing, Michigan, was: "Dialect is the local style of pronunciation of a word." Dialect, however, involves more than just words. It is seen also in pronunciations, in grammar, even in syntax and in intonation. It is not just regional speech. It can be that of any social group, of any occupation group, of any racial group, of any number of other possible subgroups. Dialect may be used to describe the ingroup speech of the educated and the socially acceptable as well as of the down and out. The term dialect, then, carries no pejorative connotation. Many of us speak different dialects depending on the situation in which we find ourselves.

The secret of social and linguistic success comes from knowing how and when to switch from one dialect to another. This is the most important thing that I am going to say. A teacher must help his student learn this secret of social and linguistic success. He certainly must not insist that the student eradicate his home speech.

We teachers of English have the reputation of being negative, of standing in our ivory towers and shooting things down. I would rather add a dimension to a person's life than shoot a dimension out of his life. Let him know what is over the horizon and encourage him to go see for himself. In the long run, his switch from one dialect to another will be facilitated much more smoothly than by telling him he must desert the old for the new.

Dialect differences exist for a number of reasons which are all tied into another phase of our lives which we as English teachers tend to overlook.

This condensation was made by John J. Schreiber of the Bureau of Publications of a tape recording of Dr. Shuy's presentation to the Linguistic Workshop conducted by the Baltimore City Public Schools, August 8-26, 1966. Dr. Shuy retains the copyright on this material and has given the Bureau of Publications permission to print this condensation in the *Baltimore Bulletin of Education.*

Settlement History

We ought to teach some of the causes for dialect differences. One such cause is to be found in history.

Whether we realize it or not, our language is influenced by the people who settled our area and established acceptable behavior patterns. Although the settlement history of an area does not prohibit future change in language or in any other aspect of culture, the vestiges of the influence of the early settlers remain for many, many years. Examples of this are seen in the German pronunciations and the German vocabulary still found in Grundy County, Illinois, the linguistic effects of the Irish in Beaver Island, Michigan, and the Britishisms found in many American communities which were settled directly from England, such as Albion, Illinois, or New Parmina, Indiana.

The first English-speaking settlers in America, of course, came from England; but at the time of the earliest settlements in Massachusetts, Virginia, Maryland, and Rhode Island, the dialects of England were by no means uniform. Speakers of these various dialects crossed the Atlantic Ocean and settled with their own dialects along the East Coast. Infrequent visits from outsiders caused these dialects to not change. That's why the East Coast has more dialect areas than we have in the Midwest. Cohesiveness of the separate colonies helped to make the dialects distinctive. To this day this area exhibits smaller and stronger dialect areas than most of the regions to the west.

Population Shift

Another reason for dialect differences lies in patterns of population shift. It's a curious thing that most Americans think of their dialect areas without considering the patterns of mobility. Ask anyone what the dialects of America are and you will probably be told that they are Southern, Eastern, and general American. Despite the tendency of textbooks to perpetuate this notion, American dialects simply do not divide themselves that neatly.

Since American population shift generally has been from east to west, dialect boundaries are more apt to run horizontally than vertically. People from western New York took their dialect to Michigan, Wisconsin, northern Illinois, and northern Ohio. The pattern of population shift is important in the formation of a regional dialect area. The steamboat played an important part in population shifts. The automobile has had and is still having its effect as well.

Another factor that affects dialects is the development of urban prestige. Cities like New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, and San Francisco have become culturally influential. No one city, however, dominates American culture nor American speech. Americans say, "Why should I speak like people from Boston?" And, indeed, why should we? A combination of factors, including the size of the country and the effects of democracy on our thinking, causes Americans to pattern on a regional rather than a national scale. It seems to me that here the English teacher has something to say about social studies.

Various urban areas become focal points in the culture, which includes the dialect of a given area. Somewhere between Chicago and Detroit, fairly close large northern cities, there are some speech features which disappear. The influence of Detroit reaches out towards Chicago in a series of concentric circles. The dialect of a community located between these two cities depends upon whose influence it comes under. Such cities as Chicago and Detroit, because of their urban prestige, become focal points in the culture which includes dialect, pronunciation, words, and grammatical choices.

Physical Geography

Another influence on dialect differences is the pattern of physical geography. Today we are seldom troubled by physical barriers such as rivers, deserts, or mountains.

Today, dialect boundaries are not apt to be found on opposite sides of a river as they were in the past.

The Connecticut River between Vermont and New Hampshire separates *pahk the cah* from *park the car*. The Connecticut River used to be a boundary. Even after bridges were built across the Connecticut River, the dialect differences continued to exist very strongly on either side. The differences might well continue into the present day. In more recently settled areas, however, we find influences of physical geography less important in establishing dialect differences.

In the East, we find that rivers are rather clear markers of dialect areas. In earlier times, rivers presented physical boundaries. West of the Mississippi, geographical boundaries were not prohibitive since settlement of the West came largely after effective developments in transportation.

Social Structure

Another reason for dialect differences, in addition to settlement history, population shift, and physical geography, is the matter of social structure. Much recent study of dialectology has been concerned with the relationship of regional dialects and social dialects. Although America does not have clear-cut class distinctions, relative judgments about a person's social rank are forced upon us daily. We make social distinctions in our own minds whether we are conscious of them or not, particularly in the matter of language.

Our difficulty in establishing what high, middle, or low class means in America is evidenced by the difficulty we have in finding names for the classes. Dialectologists have resorted to various numbering systems in an attempt to avoid being called prejudiced; but no matter what they do, they are subject to criticism.

Since language involves itself in so many different aspects of the curriculum, I think the English classroom is a natural place to coordinate the various disciplines in the curriculum.

The factors usually thought of as the special property of history and the social studies course are of great significance in the study of American English. Our language, after all, is made up of the various elements of history, geography, and society in the backgrounds of us all.

Differences in Vocabulary

I would like to call attention here to some things in terms of dialect differences and vocabulary which might be useful for the classroom teacher. Everybody is interested in vocabulary, although I think vocabulary is the least significant of the areas of dialectology in terms of social contrast.

There are vocabulary differences related to age, to sex, to education, to occupation, and to origin.

The use of certain words indicates the speaker's age. An electric refrigerator may be known as an icebox to some people, even though iceboxes have not been in common use for many years. Older natives of the Northern dialect areas still may call a skillet a *spider*, a term which you may never have heard in this part of the country.

Sex differences, of course, are not difficult to find. *Lovely, peachy*, and *darling* are not apt to be found in the vocabulary of boys. Adult males are not apt to know or use many words concerned with cooking, sewing, or women's styles; and women of all ages are not likely to use the specialized vocabulary of sports or automotive repairs or plumbing.

A person may reveal his educational or occupational background through his choice of words. It is no secret that learning the specialized vocabulary of psychology, electronics, linguistics, or fishing is necessary before one becomes fully accepted as an insider. Truck drivers, secretaries, tire builders, sailors, and farmers provide specialized vocabulary of occupation groups in everyday language.

Origins will also be indicated in vocabulary. "A baby *creeps*," is generally Northern. *Crawls* is Midland. The container in which you carry water or milk is a *pail* in most Northern dialect areas and a *bucket* elswhere. A carbonated beverage is *pop, soda, tonic*, or a *soft drink*. In the center of some fruits, we find *seeds, kernels, pits*, or *stones*.

A good reference for the study of vocabulary is Hans Kurath's *A Word Geography of the Eastern United States*. In this day and age, no one is going to shoot you down for a vocabulary word used in a different sense from his own. He may consider your use of the word amusing or quaint, but I don't think you are going to be typed socially for having used it. The study of vocabulary differences, however, makes for interesting classroom work.

Differences in Pronunciation

The study of pronunciation is somewhat more difficult to handle because it requires an ear for language and some basic background of the major sounds of language, of English. The difference between *creek* and *crick* is not hard to hear. We asked in Detroit what a small body of water running through a farm would be called and we usually got *crick*. When we did get *creek* for the general term, we often got Battle *Crick* for the city where cereals are prepared. A pronunciation hangs on to a place name longer than it does on a general term. *Creek* is gaining in the North even though it's a Southern pronunciation. It is gaining in the Northern cities first and then working its way out into the country.

East of the Appalachians, people say getting *mahried* whereas I say getting *merried.* Where I come from we make no contrasts between *merry* (as in Merry Christmas) and *Mary*, nor between *Mary* and *marry. Ro͞of* is Midland Southern and *ro͝of,* Northern. In the urban North, *ro͞of* is gaining. *Kĕtch* is supposed to be a bad pronunciation for catch, but you'll "ketch" most teachers in the Midwest saying it most of the time.

Teachers who teach that there's a consistent pronunciation of phonogramic relationships among certain lists of words must take care to put them in their regional context, because some parts of the country have it one way and other parts, another way.

Differences in Grammatical Forms

There are any number of pronunciations which we could consider, but let us now take a look at some of the differences in grammar. To this day, the grammar books are not settled as to what is the past tense of *dive.* Most dictionaries list two past tense forms: *dove,* found largely in the North; *dived,* found in the Midland areas.

What is a teacher to do about the past tense of *dive*? Teachers, in the past, felt the need to select one form or the other. *Dived* was probably taught more often because that's what most grammar books say is correct. When you see *dove* in Detroit and Chicago newspapers and when you hear Senators and Presidents say *dove,* you wonder who is out of step here.

I think one of the most important things that linguistics geography or linguistics can add to the teaching of English is that they provide more precise answers to such questions. The simple fact here is that *dived* is a Midland-Southern form and *dove* is a Northern form; that *dived* is gaining in the urban North, perhaps on the principle of analogy with all other *ed* words. Ever since the time of Chaucer, English has been dropping the seven classes of strong verbs and adding to the three classes of weak verbs. Any new verb today takes an *ed* form in English.

In the urban North, then, *dived* is gaining over *dove* and perhaps is going to win out in the long run. That is as much of the whole truth as we can say. It is not simply a matter of one is right and the other is wrong, but there is something going on that is much more precise that we can say about such grammatical forms as *dived* and *dove.*

Language change is constant and also interesting. Which is "correct"? *Quarter of four. Quarter 'til four. Quarter to four. Quarter before four.* There are a number of grammatical items in the new book *Discovering American Dialects* which will be useful to the teacher of English.

I think that the teacher of English, rather than taking differences in vocabulary, pronunciation and grammatical forms as problems, should use them as beginning points for interesting discussions.

Dialectology in the Classroom

I have been saying things along the way about the place dialectology has in the classroom. I now would like to put these things into a framework.

Here are some cardinal rules, it seems to me, that we can discuss.

First of all, *the teacher should not ridicule the speech of his student no matter what it is.* Most teachers are conscientious, believe in their children, and want to help them. Yet, we do tend to ridicule a student's speech.

Once when I was working for the National Council of Teachers of English, I asked teachers, "How would you describe the speech of the children in your classrooms?" They said, "Ugly. Horrible. Miserable. Slovenly." All of these teachers worked in disadvantaged areas. Then I would ask, "What are the features which are ugly, slovenly?" I had a hard time getting answers which were related to what I saw in the classroom. I don't think we're going to get anywhere if we subconsciously or consciously ridicule the children we teach. I doubt that you're going to communicate much to somebody whose speech you abhor.

Another of Shuy's principles is this: *Speakers of one dialect are not inherently superior to speakers of another dialect.* I'm saying here that speakers of substandard (whatever that means) dialect are not inherently inferior to speakers of standard dialect. For one thing, how do you define "standard"? What is standard in England is not standard in the U.S.

What is standard in Texas is not standard in New York. Perhaps we can define it as that which enables a person to get along well within his own group. Then there is a standard English which is different in one group from a standard English in another group. Is *dived* then better than *dove?* Is *ro͞of* better than *ro͝of*?

America, with its expanded provincialism or nationalism or whatever you want to call it, enables me to say that I'm as right as you are, by George, and just because I'm from Texas and you're from Boston doesn't mean that you're better than I am. On the other hand, we must also be conscious of the view others take of us. We must be willing to learn a more "acceptable" dialect and to use it when the appropriate time arrives.

My third principle: *Understand your current attitudes in relation to your own social background.* Perhaps I am covering the same ground that I covered in the first principle. If you have just recently emerged from the lower middle class yourself or lower class to middle class or lower middle to upper middle, be sure you understand yourself in relationship to your judgments of others. For example, I have no way of saying, "I am right, ... I?" I can't say, "Ain't I?" because I am an English teacher. I can't say, "Am I not?" because people of my generation where I'm from just don't say it. "Aren't I" is just as pretentious as it can be to me. I think I understand, however, my son who says, "Aren't I?" He can say it because people in his community say it.

I don't know how many papers I have marked wrong in grading compositions on things which are only manifestations of my own provincialism in terms of speech.

A fourth principle is this: *Both standard and substandard dialects are systematic.* A dialect which calls for *I runs, you runs, he runs, we runs, they runs* is just as systematic as the one calling for *I run, you run, he runs, we run, they run.*

Subgroup dialects, since they are systematic, can be as clearly described as standard dialects. If I have a knowledge of the subgroup dialect system, I know what I am "teaching against." I also know what transforms should be taught in order to achieve the standard dialect.

Another thing that dialectology does for the classroom, it seems to me, is that it points out structural interference on the grammatical level. A child is reading this sentence: "He *walks* down the street." He actually reads, "He *walk* down the street." It is very likely that the child has merely transferred the *walks* of the printed page to his own dialect where it is *walk*. Is this a problem of not pronouncing an *s*? I think not. It seems to me to be more of a problem of grammatical interference of one dialect with that of another. The child doesn't have a reading problem. This child understands so well that he translates a word into his own dialect. What we do about it is another matter. For oral reading, I guess we want him to pronounce the *s*. Understanding the grammar of a dialect may be very useful in diagnosing problems in grammatical interference in another dialect.

Differences in Usage

The terms sociolinguistics and sociodialectology are fairly new and convey somewhat different concepts from the old definition of usage.

What do you, as teachers of English, think of the usage in the following sentences?

(1) His work is different than mine.
(2) Can I have some more?
(3) Everyone put on their coats.
(4) We only have five left.
(5) I will pay your bill.

These sentences have been selected from those used by Norman Lewis in a survey which he reported in *Harper's*.[1] Lewis received 460 responses in his survey of some 19 items of doubtful usage. Those who responded included 155 teachers of college English, 12 dictionary makers, 33 authors, 80 editors, 22 radio commentators, 32 teachers of high school English, 60 subscribers to *Harper's* selected at random, 48 feature writers and columnists, and 26 women's magazine editors.

The first sentence in the *Harper's* survey gained 31% acceptance. Eleven of the 12 dictionary makers accepted it. The second sentence received 40% acceptance. Two-thirds of the teachers of college English accepted this one. The third sentence was accepted by 45% of the respondents. Again, two-thirds of the teachers of college English accepted it. The fourth sentence was accepted by 44% of the respondents. And again, two-thirds of the teachers of college English accepted it. The fifth sentence was accepted by 90% of the respondents.

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[1] Norman Lewis, "How Correct Must Correct English Be?" *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 198 (March 1949), pp. 68-74.

What I am getting at here is not that we are now absolved from the problem of finding usage items. Rather, I am saying that here is one way of getting at an accurate statement about usage based on some evidence. What interests me here is not whether these sentences are classified as acceptable or not but the basis on which the decision is made. If we reject or accept a particular construction, we ought to have a good basis for rejecting or accepting it.

I am attempting to focus on the problem of deciding what is good English and what is not. If we seek authority to back up our usage, whose authority do we use? We shall examine several systems of deciding what good English really is, and, in doing so, we'll find that man is a rather complex person. The word *good*, when we talk about good English, has a way of changing its complexion depending on such factors as context, audience, subject matter, age, and interests. It is very difficult to find a good English which exists at all times. We'll find also that language change has an important bearing on any definition of good English.

Furthermore, we'll find that the total communication structure relates significantly to our own understanding of good English. We may be — in fact we usually are — unaware of our deviation from society's norms.

Authorities for Good Usage

Systems of finding good English are many. We may seek the authority of a person, of a book, of a discipline, or of society.

Let's begin with the authority of a person. We have all lived under the iron rule of a solid, firm, unbending English teacher. Her ways were the right ways, her judgments final. Although we disliked her rigidity to a certain extent, we found it comforting that some rigidity existed in the world. Unfortunately, we were never able to fathom exactly why her judgments were made. Then, when we met another equally strong English teacher whose standards varied from those of the first, we were faced with the dilemma of deciding which of the former instructors — rigid, wonderful people though they were — was right?

Of course, the authoritarian person means well. He wants to add the rigidity that seems to be lacking in the world of English and, perhaps, in the child's life. He creates problems for the child when his rigidity is not the rigidity of the next teacher or when his rigidity does not agree with the textbook.

What about the authority of a book? Over the last two generations, professional students of language, then teachers, and last of all laymen have begun to understand something about usage. The layman, however, suffers a tension resulting from a feeling of relief at being told not to feel guilty about using language naturally and from his expectation that the dictionaries and handbooks are supposed to make him feel guilty.

Let's turn now to the authority of a discipline. We know that radio-TV people have their own standards. Obviously the seminary has its own standards since pulpit diction is quite different from the diction that you hear elsewhere. I have a very good friend, a Baptist minister, who becomes an entirely different person in the pulpit. I tell him that he's schizophrenic. He's informal and chatty in personal relationship, but he rolls his *r's* in the pulpit. Speech teachers have their standards. The newspapers have their own authority on usage. Theodore Bernstein of the *New York Times* in his book called *Watch Your Language* makes a number of interesting statements about usage which are relevant to the *New York Times*.[2] Keep in mind that they are pertinent for those who write for the *Times* but are not necessarily pertinent for others. If you want to write for the *New York Times*, you had jolly well better follow Theodore Bernstein's prejudices and his ideas. I would strongly suggest, however, that you don't use it for love letters.

English teachers, who certainly represent a discipline, are perhaps less unified in their choice of usage than representatives of other disciplines. It seems to me that English teachers should have a stronger unification of usage standards than they do.

Society also exercises its own brand of authority over language. What I am saying here is that language is primarily sociological and that society agrees upon certain things. Although some children say *desses* for *desks*, society decides that they are called *desks*. The society formed by nine-year-olds on a play-ground may decide that they are *desses*, and the nine-year-old who wants to be "in" calls them *desses*. We all know that women speak in a somewhat different language from that used by men. In other words, society, however it defines itself — as Brooklyn, as Baltimore, as nine-year-old Negro boys in Detroit's inner city — has its own ways of deciding what's right and what isn't. Were this not so, we'd still be saying *puer* instead of *boy*.

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[2] Theodore M. Bernstein, *Watch Your Language* (New York, Atheneum Publishers, 1965).

The usage committee of the American Dialect Society has been attempting to make statements about usage in the *Publications of the American Dialect Society* (PADS). *The Journal of American Speech*, the same type of journal, published by Columbia University Press, contains many articles on vocabulary, pronunciation, and other matters having to do with contemporary American English usage. These are attempts at recording what society judges useful or nonuseful.

There are ways of getting at good English, and some ways are better than others. Simply accepting the authority of the textbook will lead you into trouble, particularly in an age in which we're telling our students to challenge the textbook, to think critically. I don't see anything wrong with facing a controversial issue in the classroom by saying, "Let's look at the facts. I don't know what the answer is. Let's see if we can find out." Do you have usage guides? Go to them. Do you have dictionaries? Go to them. Do you have a linguistics atlas? Go to it. More and more material is becoming available to use for research of this sort.

Usage is in one way a complicated problem; in another way it is a relatively simple one. Certain pronunciations and certain vocabulary and grammatical items are valued more than others for certain situations. That's the simple part. The complex part is determining exactly how they are valued in exactly what situations.

Almost everyone recognizes that in some way some people use the language more effectively than the rest. Their way of handling the language attracts attention. People are encouraged to emulate them. The self-made man, who is comfortable in the language he has been using for years, may be tempted by advertisements that ask him, "Do you make these mistakes in English?" He builds up within himself a tension between the old, comfortable ways and the new ways that promise to make him "acceptable." This tension can easily lead to insecurity and the insecurity, to timidity. Say it the safe way, do it the easy way, the way which won't get you in trouble.

In writing and in composition of any sort, however, tension and insecurity will produce timidity. The very thing we don't want in composition is timidity. "Be brave, be bold!" we say.

Classification of Usage

One treatment of the dimensions of usage is that usage is either good or it is bad. A scale which is frequently given in usage guides and English textbooks is *literary, standard formal, standard informal, homely*, and *illiterate*. This type of scale is not only unuseful but it is also harmful and misleading. Usually we interpret *literary* as best, *standard formal* as second best, *standard informal* as third best, *homely* as fourth best, and *illiterate* as worst.

Grammarians over the years have tried to discover the universal principles upon which to judge good usage. George Campbell in the 18th century, in his English textbooks, said that in deciding upon which word or which expression to use, one should prefer the present, the reputable, and the national. This seems like a pretty good idea to me. However, usage handbooks have reflected more interest in items than in principles for judging the items. Of course, there were problems in interpreting Campbell's criteria, but he had criteria first.

If we accept the theory of setting up criteria for judging usage, what principles do we have?

We have the principle of history. I think that the teacher of English would find a knowledge of the history of the language very useful in the classroom. Explaining the influence of the Norman Conquest on the *ough* words (*rough, tough, bough, through*), for example, is of more value than just saying, "That's the way English is."

The textbooks that warn against *slow* used as an adverb evidently are unaware of the fact that in Old English *slow* was an adverb as well as an adjective. Words, such as *slow*, present the opportunity for the teacher to give the historical background that accounts for the usage surrounding them.

Besides the principle of history, there are the principles of psychology and sociology. Let's take another look at the item *We only have five left.* Many textbooks tell us to put *only* next to the word it modifies. Presumably, then, *only* is supposed to be modifying *we*, and the usage is incorrect because the statement is illogically arranged. On the other hand, some linguists claim that psychologically such a statement is perfectly acceptable because it cannot possibly be misunderstood. It's not exactly ungrammatical. It's not even socially unacceptable this way. Robert Pooley in his book feels this is the case.[3] I have no reason to doubt his opinions on this.

Sociological principles also operate here. The only valid reason for the creation, preservation, or extinction of a word is whether it is useful to our society or not. If we need the word, it will live; if we don't need it, it will probably die. We are going through an interesting period right now with the word *index*. It seemed for awhile that *indexes* was gaining on *indices*, but now *indices* is popular again. We are even developing a back formation which I have heard many educated people use in the last year. The plural *indices* would suggest the singular is *indice*. I have heard *indice* even in professional societies. I say *dāta* when I am talking to English teachers and *dăta* when I'm talking to linguists. In editing *Social Dialects and Language Learning*, I had both English teachers and linguists look it over. The linguists were adamantly in favor of *dāta is*, whereas the English teachers generally wrote *dăta are*. I don't remember the last time I saw *datum* in print. Perhaps it occurs occasionally, but it certainly is not needed as often as the plural.

Well, what then do we do in our attempt to find the dimensions in usage? Well, we look for things which will indicate clearly that something is *formed* which will enable people to appreciate us rather than laugh at us.

The Scales of Martin Joos

Martin Joos in his monograph called "The Five Clocks " looks at usage through four scales, each scale having five clocks.[4]

RESPONSIBILITY	BREADTH
best	genteel
better	puristic
good	standard
fair	provincial
bad	popular

AGE	STYLE
senile	frozen
mature	formal
teenager	consultative
child	casual
baby	intimate

The style scale is the one in which Joos is most interested. Styles are appropriate to the occasion. They are appropriate to the size of the group, the degree of familiarity within the group and they are even appropriate to the subject being discussed. The problem comes in selecting the proper style and shifting from one style to another.

The paradox, perhaps, of English teaching is that we aim for one style of English, whereas we should aim for many styles. It is certainly appropriate for a preschool child to call his train a *choo choo*. By the early teens, the child usually has at least three working styles (serious, systematic data gathering is limited here): one style for his peer group, one style for parents and other adults, and one style for strangers. This is a minimal stylistic repertoire needed for the normal social life of the teenager.

For educated adults, the five Joos styles are common. The consultative style is the central one which is used for opening a conversation with a stranger. The major focus in the consultative style is on communication with a minimum of social, aesthetic, or emotional

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[3] Robert C. Pooley, *Teaching English Usage* (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, n.d.).

[4] Martin Joos, "The Five Clocks," *International Journal of American Linguistics (April, 1962).*

Almost all teachers believe both that they recognize the differences between such students' "natural" language and the kind of standard language which is believed to be desirable, and that they understand how to teach the standard dialect to their students . . . The fact of the matter is that differences in dialect and differences in variety of language are far more complex than the training of most teachers has led them to suspect.

Thomas J. Creswell, "The Twenty Billion Dollar Misunderstanding," *Social Dialects and Language Learning*, National Council of Teachers of English, 1964, p. 69

overtones that characterize other styles.

The casual style is what we'd use in easy conversation among friends, except when the seriousness of the occasion calls for consultative style. Here we find elided pronunciations such as *I'm gonna*. The sentences tend to be more elliptical, such as *Eat yet? Coming tonight?* It may include slang or even occasional profanity. It is not used to convey very serious or complex information because even close friends should use consultative style for serious or complex information. In writing, this casual style is characterized by a lot of contractions, abbreviations, the heavy use of the dash. One of the things I try to tell college students in freshmen composition is to be more consultative and less casual, less chatty, less informal. The most commonly used style of the high school and college student is the casual style except in the classroom and in writing where he shifts to the consultative style. As teachers, we must recognize this fact for we need to help the student to know when to switch and when not to.

The intimate style is used by people who know each other so well that they can predict each other's reactions to a given situation. Much communication here is nonlinguistic — eyebrow-raising, shrugging, groaning. Husbands and wives communicate with such things as *Hmm?* and *Un-huh* which depend on intonation for meaning. Words are often slurred, are clipped; there's an accidental mispronunciation, maybe purposely preserved.

The formal style, expository discourse, is informative and discursive. It is not conversational. It is used by lecturers, by preachers, newscasters, judges, legislators, by anybody alone before an audience or by a writer writing to an audience which cannot talk back.

The frozen style is literary. The fact that it is preserved in such a way that we would not want to change it is why it is called frozen.

Intimate style fuses two personalities. Casual style integrates different personalities into a social group which is greater than the sum of its parts. Consultative style produces cooperation without the kind of integration that you get with casual style. Formal style informs the individual separately on a one-to-one basis so that his future planning may be more discriminating. Frozen style lures the reader into educating himself so that he may be more confident in acting the role he chooses. The key here is that these styles all require subtle shifts of pronunciation, grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, depending on whether the language used is written or spoken. It is not a matter of good versus bad or literary versus homely. The native speaker must learn to control these shifts to a varying degree and I think this is the tremendous task of the English teacher — to be able to handle this kind of thing.

Detroit Dialect Study

If we are to make statements about what people actually say, we must do large-scale language gathering studies. I am going to discuss very briefly the Detroit Dialect Study, which I am conducting, in the hope that such an overview will give you an idea of how such studies are organized and carried out.

The purpose of our research in Detroit is, first of all, to describe the speech of Detroiters from various economic and age levels and of various ethnic, religious, and geographical origins. We are interested in any kind of an ingroup, no matter what it is. Since there are 70 ethnic groups in Detroit, we spent most of our efforts on those groups which live in particular kinds of ghettos. Other ethnic groups include Negroes, Jews, Poles, Mexicans, and Appalachian Whites. We can split these groups into various subgroups, basing our distinctions on the scales of breadth, age, style, and responsibility.

Our second purpose is to relate this linguistic description to the sociological factors involved in order to determine what speech features characterize each group. We want to gather data, but we want to relate the data to any kind of information we have about age, the geographical origin of grandparents, of parents, about religion and many other things.

We want to relate the linguistic facts that we find to whatever other information we can discover about Detroit. Sociologists, for example, have found that the Poles on the east side of Detroit tend to have different values from those of Poles on the west side and that those from the east side who change their residence tend to move to one section whereas those from the west side move to another.

Our interest in describing the speech of Detroiters is not limited to that of the inner city people; we are interested in as many classes as we can get. We know that our sample is not going to tell us in the end that Detroit speech is such and such. We are not even pretending that. What we want to do is to gather the speech, relate it to the sociological factors, and then utilize the information to provide a theoretical basis for pedagogy and even to develop some materials for the classroom. If we discover certain kinds of syntax features characteristic of one group, we want to tell teachers who work with members of the group what these features are and to tell teachers in other areas not to worry about such features.

Since time for making this study is limited, it has seemed to me that we should focus on problems. We need background information on comparisons of geographical areas, of ethnicity, race, or even religion, and of age.

In our survey, we have interviewed children of the fourth and sixth grades, teenagers, parents, and grandparents.

By now, you are probably wondering how we chose our informants. We decided to use the registration files of all the public school children in Detroit as our population. We randomly selected schools from each of 10 areas and then randomly selected 10 children from each school from the 4th to 6th grades. We did not feel competent to interview anyone below the 4th grade. Then we interviewed the older sibling, if there was one. If there were two older siblings, we would pick the one who was not out of high school and work our way down. We wanted to get an age difference here because we know that something happens to the language between the middle elementary grades and high school. If possible, we would like to get a measurement of those differences.

We interviewed one or the other parent on a rigid basis, the father in one case, the mother in the next. We interviewed a grandparent if one was available.

We finished the fieldwork on August 12. We have between 700 and 750 interviews in the city of Detroit. That may not seem like very many, but keep in mind that up to this time the total knowledge that we had was based on four interviews conducted 20 years ago. We had only 8 weeks and 12 field workers. Each field worker could do approximately two interviews a day, each interview running about one and a half hours.

The basic areas in the language to be examined here were pronunciation (word formation, inflections, and derivational affixes in this case), syntax (the way word order patterns go), and vocabulary. I was least interested in vocabulary and my questionnaire reflected it. I think vocabulary is interesting but it does not carry the crucial social standing that pronunciation, grammar, and syntax do. The search here was for indices of social standing within the matrices of race, economics, religion, age, ethnicity, origin — whatever other matrix we had in mind.

Let me give you some examples of the phonological indices that we are testing now. The final consonant deletion is one such thing. The dropping of the *d* and the *t* in such words as *bed* and *wet* are examples that come to mind. The substitution of *f* for *th* in such words as *bathroom* and the dropping of the final *g* in words that end in *ing* are others. In addition to deletions, modifications, and substitutions, we are also studying consonant additions (*chimbley* for *chimney*), vowel deletions *(g'rage* for *garage),* and vowel lengthening *(caow* for *cow).* These are only some of the phonological indices being studied.

In our study, we are going to talk about grammatical indices in terms of processes rather than items. We think that it will be more useful in the long run if we can lump grammatical things into patterns rather than simply say, "Here are a list of grammatical things." So the processes involved are the morphophonemic processes, the analogical processes, the deletion processes, the processes of addition, the processes of permutation, the processes of concordial relationships, the processes of expanded or restricted form class usage. What we want to do is to put all these things into various kinds of processes so that the teacher will have a better grasp of the unity, the problem involved.

I think it is much better to understand that the child's problem is one of analogy than it is to say "Your problem is that you put *ed*'s where they don't belong."

One of the morphophonemic processes which is common is the neutralization of the *an* distinction (*a* apple instead of *an* apple). This seems to be an age grader in Detroit. It also has some social manifestations beyond age grading. When we come upon such things as *string-strang, bring-brang, gooder, badder*, or *feet-feets*, we put them under the process of analogy because we would like to be able to understand why the child is saying what he says, not just what he is saying.

The process of deletion is one which grammatically has bearing in Detroit. We found particle deletion (*you out the game* for *you are out of the game*), copula deletion (*he crummy, he nice*), article deletion (*I want to make wish* for *I want to make a wish*), conjunction deletion (*there eight ten horses* for *there are eight or ten horses*), auxiliary deletion (*we playing* for *we are playing*), relative deletions (*different things Santa brings*). The deletion of the dependent clause with a comparative (*I like arithmetic better*) is another case. I look at this problem from the viewpoint of deletion process rather than as a logic problem — better than *what*? Here is the deletion of a whole unit of speech which I prefer to consider in the same class with copula deletion, particle deletion, and conjunction deletion.

We are also looking at the process of addition. Prepositions seem to be the most fruitful area. Adverbs come in for their share.

By the process of permutation, which is another we are dealing with, I mean the change in linear order of things, such as *he used to always go* instead of *he always used to go*.

Another process is that of concordial relations, the subject-verb concord; for example, *I watches, we goes, he go*. We are trying to discover the systematic pattern of this concordial relation as it exists in Detroit. Multiple negatives fit into concordial relations. We asked, "How much have you traveled?" One of the respondents said, "*I ain't never went nowhere on no trip*."

There is the expanded or restricted form class usage, such as we have with pronouns — *I buy me a house* (the object pronoun used as a reflexive), *Him and my sister went home* (object pronouns as a subject), *He's better than me* or *better than I* (pronoun with a comparative).

We are studying, then, certain numbers of grammatical indices. We are also studying some syntactical indices, which are not quite as easy to formulate because nobody has really said anything about dialect in syntax.

We are now preparing a file which will show the exact number of occurrences of each sentence type, each clause type, and each phrase type used by each speaker in Detroit. It is a fantastic undertaking. It is laborious but it is important in terms of language learning. Four typists have been working all summer making transcripts of the recorded interviews. The linguist takes the transcript and checks it for accuracy against the tape. After the transcript has been retyped and put on a stencil, it is run off and studied bit by bit — every phrase, clause, and sentence. We go through our potential indices of syntax and our potential indices of grammar to see what he does and how many times. We record every peculiar use that we think is diagnostic. At the present time, we are testing hypotheses. We intend to do a lot more, of course, in the organization of the findings. Ours is a monumental undertaking, but when it is finished it will say more about Detroit English than any file of its kind yet in existence.

We came upon a few new terms in Detroit, but we are not really as much interested in vocabulary as we are in grammar and syntax.

Our study will relate to the teaching of English primarily in describing what actually is there in terms of pronunciation, grammar, and syntax. It should indicate where a particular kind of problem exists or with what types of people. It should indicate the *why* as well as the *what*. It should find the systems into which the language of each child fits.

This study would not do the schools of Detroit much good if all we did was tabulate the results and hand over the tabulations. In the case of one respondent who reverted to a different system of language when he became emotional, I think it is worthwhile for the teacher to know that this is a systematic reversal and that it is common. Teachers may be tempted to say, "What a chaotic thing. Why, this boy, for no reason in the world, starts using a copula. He knows better." I think the situation is quite different when he understands why.

Another thing that must be related is the interference of subgroup speech to standard English. When a student reads *I be the one who came* for *I am the one who came*, his problem is not a reading problem nor a phonemegrapheme problem; it is a grammatical interference problem.

I think there's something to be said for applying this kind of research to composition. If we can isolate by quantitative analysis the number of each phrase, clause and sentence type used by people of different age, racial, economic, ethnic, geographical, and religious groups, we can discover something about how syntax acquisition comes about. So far, no one has said much about this. Composition teaching, unless it has changed since I stopped teaching composition, lacks concreteness. Our research in Detroit, I think, will say something about composition which is factual. I hope it will be useful.

Certainly we can also say something about usage statements. I think a great deal of ink is wasted on nonexistent problems. Usage problems vary from place to place, situation to situation. Basically, we are attempting to find out exactly who needs what said to him.

I really am excited about the kind of research we are carrying on in Detroit. I think our results will be of great usefulness to English teachers in the Detroit area. I am hopeful that teachers outside the Detroit area will also benefit from the results of our study.

Linguistics Is a Process

Linguistics is a process; it's a special way of doing something, and [it] has two parts to it. One part concerns what we call *attitudes.* In order to behave as linguists do, in order to do linguistics, one has to accept certain attitudes. These are as well known to you as they are to me. They go by various names such as tentativeness, objectivity, a certain hostility to authority, certainly a hostility to authoritarianism, openmindedness, willingness to accept the fact that there can be different answers to a single question, willingness to accept the fact that any answer you have in your head today is subject to change and sometimes immediate change. All of these are attitudes that we generally associate with the scientific methods of inquiry. You cannot do linguistics unless you are willing to accept these attitudes.

In addition to attitudes, there are certain *operations* that are part of the process of doing linguistics. Once again, these are well known to you. To oversimplify, let me name five or six of them: *Question-asking*—you almost always start an inquiry by asking the question; *Defining*—you spend considerable time trying to make as clear as possible the meanings of the key terms you are using; *Observing, Classifying, Generalizing, Verifying*—all of these are operations that we associate with scientific methods of inquiry . . .

It seems to me that if linguistics is a process, if it's a way of doing something, then what this means for the English teacher is that he must refashion his classroom environment so that almost daily what his students are doing is linguistics, and by "doing it" I mean using the attitudes and procedures that I referred to. If the students are not doing that, then they are not doing linguistics, the classroom is not a linguistically-oriented classroom. . .

[Linguistics] stresses active inquiry on the part of the learner so that any classroom in which the study of language is fundamentally an act of obedience is not a linguistics classroom, no matter what definition of a noun is being used or what definition of a sentence is being used.

What is at stake here for all of us is in a way even more fearful and painful than what some of us might think is involved in making changes, because what we need is not so much a new English, if you'll forgive my saying it, but a new English teacher . . . who makes the whole range of language behavior the subject of inquiry, so that what his students are doing is not giving back a kind of hi-fi or low-fi recording of someone else's answers to someone else's questions, but . . . actively doing what the linguists do.

What linguists do is ask questions, define their terms, make observations, classify their data, draw generalizations from data, and verify. As they do this, they accept as a matter of course all of the attitudes that we associate with the scientific method of inquiry . . .

Neil Postman, *Associate Professor of English Education,* New York University, addressing the workshop, "Linguistics Applications to the Teaching of the English Language," sponsored by the Baltimore City Public Schools and the University of Maryland.

Nonstandard Speech Patterns

Many people will be surprised to learn that nonstandard dialect has a coherent, structured, meaningful system of its own with its own historical background. Dr. Stewart's intensive investigations into an increasingly critical area stress that it avails the teacher little to recognize a deviation from standard English without understanding the nature of the deviation. "Without the sophistication to evaluate exactly," Dr. Stewart says, "the teacher must use a great deal of caution in a correction device."

WILLIAM A. STEWART

Talking about dialect variation and the problem of dialect differences involves sociology, foreign language teaching technique, the history of the United States, and, in some cases, foreign language differences.

A change has taken place — primarily because of changes in educational and social philosophy in the United States — not only about who is to be taught but also about what is to be taught. Groups that were very much left in the periphery or totally outside of the educational process in America have in the last few decades been taken seriously into the educational process.

The goals have become more practical, since the people who have been included have been people representing actually a much wider range of cultural differences, of economic differences, and of background. Many very different kinds of people have to be trained for practical interaction with other kinds of people in a life which, being more and more technological, requires increasingly some kinds of formal education as preparation for acting in a technological society. The days when people could get by, where most people, in fact, expected to get by as simply a ditchdigger, are past.

With respect to the socioeconomically disadvantaged, particularly people — many of them Negroes — in the slum areas of our big cities, educators now have to ask: How can I teach these people what I need to teach them?

Linguistic History

Knowing something about the history of the Negro in the city ghettos means knowing linguistic history as well as social history. At the formation of the United States as we know it today, Africans made up some of the very first immigrants. They started arriving along the South American coast before practically anybody arrived in North America, and Africans also were among the first people to arrive in North America. They weren't in the very first wave; but soon after, they started coming.

By the late 1690's, which is still fairly early

This condensation was made by Vincent D. Malin of the Bureau of Publications of a tape recording of Dr. Stewart's presentation to the Linguistic Workshop conducted by the Baltimore City Public Schools, August 8-26, 1966. Dr. Stewart retains the copyright on this material and has given the Bureau of Publications permission to print this condensation in the *Baltimore Bulletin of Education*.

in American history, a sizable number of Negroes was in the United States, some Africans and some western-born Negroes. Africans came to the United States with a foreign language as their native tongue usually, and they were faced with the problem of acquiring the language of the new nation, the language of most of the immigrants in this new nation.

Because they were of slave status (as the vast majority of them were for the next few centuries), very little in the way of formal education was open to them. English had to be picked up as best it could until the development of an elite — today we would call it Negro, but in the early days a social distinction was made — a mulatto caste (usually derived from a union between master and slave). They were often freedmen in the Boston and New York area, although in the Southern areas they were still defined as having slave status because usually they were of a slave mother. They were given formal education, and often they constituted an elite cadre of household-type servants.

A social dichotomy arose then between the elitists, who were upper-class or relatively upper-class, formally educated, fairly standard-speaking Negroes, and the darker-skinned field hands, who throughout the group's linguistic history by and large were nonstandard speaking Negroes. It's been a dichotomy which is well known and well studied by Myrdal and Franklin Frazier and such people and has existed right up until recently within the Negro community.

To most of the field hands — and they constituted the majority — formal education wasn't open. They weren't educated in schools, and they just had to pick up English as best they could. Now, although it has been generally assumed historically that African slaves arrived on the North American mainland speaking no English at all, we have to revise this opinion. There's evidence, for example, that a kind of pidgin English was spoken as a trade language and primarily as a slave trade language along the West African coast ranging roughly from where Dakar is today clear down through the Ivory and Gold Coasts — that is, down to roughly where the Fernando Po Island is in the south. So along the whole area of Africa, running from off the coast of Senegal to off the coast of Cameroon, at the slave stations, at the trading stations, watering places, and landfalls for ships, tribal people and sailors used two or three kinds of pidgin languages for trade. One was pidgin English, another was pidgin Portuguese, and another was one of the African languages pidginized — all still used in varieties along the West African coast.

Many slaves brought with them this pidgin English, as did many whites who were engaged in the slave trade, and it apparently gained quite a bit of currency among the early dark-skinned field hands. These African slaves were deliberately mixed ethnically. The policy of slave owners and slave buyers was to mix the African slaves with respect to travel origin, the language they spoke, and the area in Africa they came from.

Plantation owners planned to keep communication, interaction, and common background to a minimum.

Rapid Linguistic Transition

The slaves had to have a common language to communicate with each other, and unless they happened to find somebody who spoke their own tribal language, they couldn't use it. They had to acquire some kind of English as a communication language between slaves even in the very early days. In one sense the African slaves coming to the United States learned a kind of English more quickly than many of the other foreign immigrants. Many foreign immigrants, Italians and Scandinavian groups, for example, took two or three generations to make the transition from the language that they came with to the kind of English they ended up speaking. For slaves, particularly the field hands, the deliberate mixing situation forced a rather rapid linguistic transition. And it had to be a makeshift one because formal education wasn't open to them.

We have many early texts of the two basic kinds of pidgin English spoken in the United States. Another kind of pidgin English developed in communication, first, between European settlers and American Indians and then, later, between different kinds of American Indians. These had previously — especially on the Plains — used one or two Indian languages as an intermediate trade language and also a nonverbal sign language. But once this American pidgin English got started, apparently along the eastern seaboard when the first European settlers had contact with the Indians there, it spread quite rapidly so that Indians were using it among each other long before European settlement had spread west, out to the Plains areas, for example.

One of the characteristics of this pidgin English was the nonsubject-object difference in pronouns. People said *me* for both *me* and *I*. Verbs that were transitive had *um* attached to the end. The stereotype of American pidgin English, *Me likum heap big chief*, is actually rather accurate. The *um* on the end of *like* is a transitivity marker. In *Me wantum wampum, want* is a transitive verb so it takes *um* on the end and *Me* is the subject. But in *Him likum me, me* is the object. American pidgin has pronoun simplification in this sense, and it also has a simpler but a more regular way of marking verb transitivity.

This American pidgin English got well established and vestiges of it are still used in Alaska in certain kinds of pidgin English still current there. I suspect, although I don't know firsthand, that bits and pieces of American pidgin English structures still survive on some Indian reservations, probably not reported even though heard by lots of people who don't know what it is.

Another pidgin English, developed and spoken in the South Pacific area, has now become almost an official language in the Malaysian and New Guinea area. It spread north to Hawaii, and today large numbers of peoples in the Hawaiian Islands speak pidgin English, a different kind of pidgin English. And a dialect problem there involves teaching standard English to pidgin speakers, now primarily of Japanese background with some of Philippine ethnic origin in Hawaii.

Slave Pidgin

For the slave pidgin in the United States many attestations are found, including attestations by such capable observers as Benjamin Franklin, who kept his ears open when he heard some characteristic slave speech in the United States and set it down. It's rather like what we know about the early stages of West African pidgin English, though in some ways a step closer to standard English. No longer in an enviroment as it had been in West Africa where the other languages spoken were quite different from pidgin, it was spoken side by side with standard English, was susceptible to the correction and direction of standard English, and therefore was a step closer.

It was also probably very similar to what is called Gullah or Geechee. (It's called Geechee in the Charleston area, although technically within the area itself Geechee refers to the sort of citified variety of the language spoken in Charleston, Georgetown, and cities along the coast.) The Gullah area extends roughly all along the coast in the rice plantation area from the South Carolina-North Carolina border halfway down Georgia. The dialect demarcation is very rigid between the rice plantation area on the coast and the cotton plantation areas in both Georgia and South Carolina. Gullah, still spoken today, especially in the Sea Islands which have been isolated historically from the inland, is quite obviously a creolized kind of pidgin English. A pidgin and a creole language are different primarily in that creole language is a pidgin language which has acquired native speakers — people who speak no other language. Pidgin language is a modified variety of a language that is used by people who speak some other language as their native language. And the pidgin modified variety has been modified because it has been influenced by the structure of the native language.

Thus, for example, if Chinese in Hong Kong suddenly had to acquire English rather quickly, their English would be modified by linguistic structures of Chinese — analogies with Chinese grammar, syntax, phonology, and lexical translations. In some cases, the English might be simplified: in other cases it might just be made different; then it would have become a pidgin language but with a lot of structural influences of Chinese. But if China were to disappear and just Hong Kong to survive, people would forget Chinese and the children of the people who spoke Chinese natively but who had learned pidgin English as a second language would learn just pidgin. And pidgin would then become what is called a creole language.

Again, in West Africa the slaves came speaking African languages and learned pidgin French. Because the African languages didn't survive, the second generation knew natively just this pidgin French which then, by definition, became the Creole language.

As the importation of slaves to America gradually diminished, people speaking African languages became rarer and rarer, and American slaves divided into the small group of fairly sophisticated, well-educated Negroes and the vast majority of field-hand types.

They spoke primarily a kind of pidgin, but when it acquired native speakers, it became by linguistic definition creolized English and was fairly different from the European language to which it was lexically related. It looked like standard English, and somebody conducting a dialectic survey by looking at its lexical items and at its sounds and not at its grammatical structures might, in fact, classify it as part of the general dialect system, although in some ways odd.

Grammatically, it was often quite different. And the early attestations of slave speech, even in the 1840's, 1850's, and 1860's when obviously the slaves were already native-born Americans, illustrate the differences, as do Gullah and the Charleston citified Gullah called Geechee today.

Liberian Resettlement Project

The Liberian resettlement project of the 1840's makes it much easier for us to tell what the linguistics of the American Negro were like at that time. The program took many freed and sometimes nonfreed Africans, and sometimes slaves freed by this particular process and "repatriated" them. The quotation marks are needed because often there was no evidence that these people's ancestors had come from the Liberian region. But Liberia was available.

Liberia preserves today in its English situation what was probably the linguistic profile of the American Negro in the 1840's. Essentially two kinds of American Negro were repatriated. The elitist type American Negro usually spoke a fairly standard variety of the local English where he was raised, for example, a fairly educated kind of Georgian English. But the dark-skinned field-hand type probably spoke something like Gullah or a very creolized English.

In Liberia today, these two kinds of English exist side by side. "Old Settler" or "Americo-Liberian" English are very much like a blend of upper-middle-class, coastal Southern standard dialects. And Liberian pidgin English is probably a direct descendant of the lower-class field-hand pidgin or creole language imported to Liberia. The two kinds of English preserve what was probably a linguistic cross section of the American Negro in the eastern coastal states in the 1840's.

Migration, North and West

The freeing of slaves after the Civil War, the Reconstruction, and the turmoil as the North industrialized and the South degenerated into a plantation area decaying in a world in which plantations were less important, began a vast movement, particularly of the Southern Negro, northward and westward. Geographic mobility has characterized the Negro from right after the Civil War until the present time. In comparison, the migration of the poor southern whites today is trivial.

As the plantation economy spread inland from the rice plantations to the cotton plantations and Negroes and whites moved from the coast inland toward the Mississippi Valley, the English of each changed. We can trace features of the coastal white dialects inland to the delta region, so that the white English of Mississippi and Alabama today is not like the white English of Georgia and Atlanta. The same is true with the dialects of the Negroes; as they got off the lowlands of the Georgia-Carolina coast and went inland and then over into the Mississippi Valley region, they got progressively more standard. The Uncle Remus dialect of Joel Chandler Harris represents actually this stage and is one step more standard than the pure creole Gullah in Johnson's *Negro Myths of the Georgia Coast*. But these stories — basically African Anansi stories, although the spider has turned into a rabbit — are the same in the coastal Gullah tales as in the inland dialect of Uncle Remus.

Like many early plantation whites, the Johnson who told the Anansi stories, in later years a Civil War Army colonel, had been raised by slaves. Many whites were totally bilingual in creole slave English. Johnson was a native speaker of Gullah. A lot of bilingualism was relatively usual between standard English and pidgin, now statistically minor in the population but still quite common. Slave overseers, whether they were white or the Negro assigned overseers, were bilingual in local standard English and pidgin English or creole. The household servants were probably bilingual, speaking standard English to their masters and a creolized English to the field hands. Even the masters were probably bilingual in the sense that in childhood they used the two kinds of standard English with their parents and probably their brothers and sisters, but creole English with the children of the field hands with whom they mingled freely up until adolescence.

Johnson was one of these cases in his beautiful Gullah. Joel Chandler Harris was in fact another example. He was raised in inland Georgia in the cotton plantation area, and his stories are in this other dialect. These are both very accurate renditions of the day as far as we can tell.

If you compare Johnson's Gullah and Harris' inland Georgia dialects, you can see what happened once the Negro left the coast and lost contact with West Indian and New African influences. The English speech of the Negroes who left the coastal area shows a transition from the Gullah to the Uncle Remus type dialect. Then the Uncle Remus type dialect again fades off into the Mississippi Valley dialect. This was all before the Civil War.

The Freedom Train and its trickle of migration north, although statistically it didn't amount to much, established channels of migration which then were later fed by large numbers of people. This pattern is characteristic of migrations. One or two persons trickle into an area, Place X, and settle. Eventually, their relatives move there. Then lots of other people have cousins, aunts, uncles, brothers, and sisters in Place X; so they move there and you get a sudden wave of migration.

The Freedom Trains had established channels of migration that Negroes started using. The stop-off points have left traces today. In Bloomington, Indiana, Negroes are, in some ways, well integrated into the white community. I found no case, for example, of a Negro household living next door to another Negro household. But the small towns were just a jump-off place on the way northward into Indianapolis and Chicago and other places.

By the early 1900's Chicago had a very well-established and sizable Negro community, as did New York, as did Washington, D.C., as did Baltimore (although Baltimore had always had one for other reasons), as did many of the Northern cities. And then in later waves, people went to the West Coast; and today Oakland, California, and Los Angeles on the West Coast have large Negro communities.

As these people moved, they took their dialects with them, whether it was the creole English that still survives along the coast or the inland Mississippi Valley type well on the way toward standard English but with bits and pieces of the creolisms left in it, or whether it was the fairly standard English of educated Negroes or the very nonstandard English of uneducated Negroes. In Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia there had been very early Negro communities made up, as far as we can tell, of standard speakers of the local dialect, whatever it was. These Negro communities, however, got swamped by the Southern immigrants and essentially they disappeared linguistically. For example, where the original Negroes lived in, say, Boston or Philadelphia, was where the immigrants would go first because of residential segregation, and, of course, the communities blended and swamped the dialect which had been spoken by very few people.

Washington, D.C., has had a Negro community for some time, which earlier probably spoke a fairly standard kind of English, not unlike what was spoken, I suspect, in Alexandria or in the old white settlement in Anacostia. The tremendous wave of migration of Negroes from coastal Virginia, from North Carolina, South Carolina, and to some extent Georgia, with sprinklings from the Mississippi Valley, has swamped the earlier English. And you can see families that are in transition, that have fairly standard-speaking parents and radically nonstandard-speaking children because the children associate with other children.

Dialect Blending

Today, Negro communities in many of the large cities represent a range of dialect behavior. The result is that the earlier dichotomy between the sophisticated, standard-speaking Negro and the lower-class, uneducated Negro is now disappearing, is dying out. A lot of dialect blending is taking place and since the nonstandard-speaking poor migrants moving north outnumber standard speakers in Negro communities, the standard kinds of English in the Negro communities tend to be swamped by the nonstandard kinds.

Essentially, there's a range of speech ("speech" rather than "dialect" because there's really no one dialect that's spoken); there's a range of linguistic behavior and styles and approximations toward and away from standard English. Many are able to switch, though not through the whole spectrum of linguistic behavior, at least across a series of contiguous dialects of three or four markedly different levels of approximation toward or away from standard English. The linguistic repertoire of members of a Negro community is a hooking together in overlapping circles where shared features connect the whole community in some ways. The ethnicity which lumps all of them together in the same boat causes, for example, the children often to end up speaking more like the poor immigrants than like their own parents, although the converse is in some individual cases also true.

Nevertheless, this common origin — this eastern-southeastern seaboard origin — resulted in the concurrent social isolation of the Negro from the world of the white. The Negro was always put in a special category. He was always treated differently, always given a special residential area, always given a special, very circumscribed range of opportunities with special limits on formal education, and so forth. Because of this, dialect maintenance occurred to much more of a degree than was characteristic of whites.

Social Isolation and Dialect Maintenance

For example, if you examine the western coast and the poor white migration westward by the Okies and Arkies, who moved on to California, for instance, you will find that among their descendants dialect differences disappeared in one generation because these people were integrated into the total community and the children had the same opportunities as other white children did in California. Consequently, the dialect differences disappeared. Negroes started moving into the Oakland and Los Angeles areas in the early 1900's. But in the Oakland, Los Angeles, and San Francisco areas, and most of Watts, we see the maintenance of various southern dialects over a long period of time where migration actually predates that of the Okies and Arkies, who came primarily in the twenties and early thirties.

Because of this dialect maintenance, an interesting number of features are shared in the more nonstandard varieties of speech that one can hear in Negro communities today throughout the United States. And some of these are attested in the early slave pidgin and creole and exist today in some kinds of West African pidgin English-Liberian, for example. One recurrent linguistic feature is the lack of a copula, as in *He a boy*. Another is a nonpossessive marker, where apposition is used for possession with a certain number of stress patterns. For example, *Me massa dog* occurs in very early slave speech for *My master's dog,* and Uncle Remus dialect has *My massa dawg*. You will find today in many nonstandard kinds of English in Negro communities throughout the United States *The man dog* for *The man's dog* and so on.

There are many of these kinds of structural features, particularly in verbal morphology, syntactic structure, etc. Although phonology is a little harder to trace, some definite phonological features seem to be preserved through the extension of these Southern Negro dialects into the North, although I think it wrong to say generally that Negro dialects in the North represent only unique Southern features. The dialect atlas of the historically typical speech of a given region was developed on the basis of white speech, unfortunately.

If you're a dialect geographer and you're moving into the South, into a community to do an atlas questionnaire, you pick the person who's lived there the longest. Who's this person usually? A white person, a little old lady sitting on a chair on a porch smoking a pipe. If there was a Negro born there at the same time that the little old lady was, he has probably gone to Chicago or Oakland or New York or Washington.

As a result, if you look at the linguistic materials in the *American Dialect Atlas* and knew anything about the way the Negro dialects in the South behave, you would think the Negro didn't exist. Some features just don't turn up in inventories of the Dialect Atlas that would have to if the Negroes had been looked at at all. One is the clear [*l*] formed with the middle of the tongue up in the center of the mouth rather than down. Another feature is the replacing of the bilabial voiced and voiceless aspirants between vowels by [*v*] and [*f*] *bruver* and *nuffing* for *brother* and *nothing* — which doesn't occur in white speech at all but is very common in almost all the kids we deal with in Washington, D.C., and most of the kids I've heard in New York and in Oakland, Watts, and all the Negro community sections. So the inadvertent bias against the Negro in the Dialect Atlas material means he got the same treatment he's gotten in history and in all historical and social studies set up within the United States — he got left out.

Social Isolation and Special Features

But if one has looked at features, he finds some unique ones in Negro dialects that are not normally shared by whites — although they can be. One thing you must understand is that where unique features exist in the speech of Negroes, they have nothing to do with physiology. They only have to do with social behavior, which is learned from other people — in the case of Negroes from other Negroes, because primarily Negroes associate with other Negroes as the American social pattern works. Negroes constitute a social group which is contained. Look, for example, at residential containment. It has produced social cohesion but it has the Negroes and whites work together, go to school together, yet when the bell rings, all go home into their own social group. Preservation of speech patterns is not physiological; it is social. A nice example is the occasional Negro who is, let's say, the only Negro in the white community and who talks just like the whites around him.

Other kinds of unique social behavior features involve Negroes. Some of the postural things are African survivals — for example, bending and laughing, and sometimes covering the mouth and turning the head in laughter. Averting the eyes, looking at an eye level lower and to the side of somebody to show deference is another postural trait. Saying "yes" with eyes raised, very common among Negroes but practically nonexistent among whites also may be an African survival. Some of these are probably out-of-awareness behavior. People learn them socially without realizing they're learning them just as they are likely to learn structure of their language without realizing they're learning it. Some just may be unique behavior that people developed. They change and social behavior changes, and in a group that's been isolated socially, they develop new norms which don't represent anything they had historically, and which also don't represent other groups. European Jewry is a good example. Also isolated in the ghettos, the European Jewry in the Middle Ages innovated. The European Jew in the Middle Ages was not at all like the Jew who migrated out of Palestine. He wasn't entirely like the surrounding Slavs or Germanic peoples. He innovated and he developed new kinds of social norms. The Negroes have done much of the same thing.

One interesting innovation within the Negro culture is ethnic slang, often confused with dialect.

Consider the following two groups of sentences:

Sl. She's a phat chick.
St. She's a pretty girl.
D. She a pretty girl.
Sl. He didn't dig his vines.
St. He didn't like his clothes.
D. He ain' like he clothes.

The sentences marked *Sl* are in ethnic ingroup dialect; those marked *St* are in standard English, and those marked *D* are in nonstandard dialect.

The slang is Howard University slang, which is as ethnical and as ingroupy as you can get, and the dialect is from local nonstandard Negro dialect spoken by kids across the street from Howard University.

The slang *She's a phat chick* for *She's a pretty girl* is standardized slang. *She's a pretty girl* is local, not standardized, in Washington and recurrent in just about every Negro community in the United States. Notice that the difference between the standard and the slang is strictly lexical substitution — *phat* for *pretty*, *chick* for *girl*. Notice that the syntax remains the same. Look at the nonstandard utterances. Lexically, the nonstandard dialect of these kids in the urban Negro ghettos is as standard as can be and is a lot more standard than the rural dialects of people who aren't considered to be nonstandard speakers. The vocabulary of these kids is tremendously standard.

In slang, the sentence *He didn't like his clothes* becomes *He didn't dig his vines*, and in dialect, *He ain' like his clothes*. The difference between the slang and the standard English is the lexical substitution of *dig* for *like* and *vines* for *clothes;* the difference between the nonstandard dialect and the standard is again grammatical. Notice the noncopulative and the nonpossessive.

Slang is a deliberate lexical substitution. Dialect is different linguistic patterns which the person actually is unaware that he's using and doesn't recognize as different. This is why I think that in certain ways people are fooling themselves when they take the approach that people in the Speech Training Program at Howard want to take. They want to give the kid a *bag of words* to use. He already has those words. You know, they are really accomplishing nothing because they're giving him a bag of what he's already got. He's got the standard words. No person, as far as I know, who uses *phat* doesn't know the word *pretty*. Nobody who uses the word *chick* doesn't know the word *girl*, nobody who uses the word *dig* doesn't know the word *like*, and nobody who uses the word *vine* doesn't know the word *clothes*. This is deliberate lexical choice well within the competence and well within the sophistication of the speaker who uses slang.

Slang involves deliberate lexical substitution, that is, the manipulation of language behavior is within the competence and sophistication of the speaker; he knows what he is doing, and he knows how to do what he wants to do.

One can use slang in conjunction with nonstandard dialect grammar and phonology, but he can also use it with standard grammatic structures. Slang varies independently of grammatical and phonological behavior. As a student's grammar and phonology become more and more standard, apparently there's a desire to innovate, to create an ingroup language.

When a slang term becomes generally accepted, when it's taken outside the ingroup function, then it's quickly dropped by the ingroup and another term replaces it. For example, the old word *cat* (for *man*) got adopted by the true jazz musician, but when the general public adopted it, *cat* was quickly dropped.

Sometimes you get a change for something, it gets generalized, and you get a semantic shift. *Cool* is a good example of this. Now, *cool* has become not an adjective but a noun — things shift around in meaning, or they are dropped and a new term is developed.

Slang is very jealously guarded, very deliberate, and very carefully manipulated. The more standard the students' grammar and lexicon, the greater tendency they have to use slang for certain kinds of ingroup communication, whereas the people who speak radically nonstandard in grammar and phonology don't do this as much. Slang is also very changeable. A slang term today disappears in its use tomorrow. Grammatical patterns, on the other hand, endure and exist over many generations. Two that are characteristic of nonstandard dialect today — the noncopula *He a man* and the nonmarking morpheme of possession *The lady hat* — were attested to in early examples of slave pidgin and Creole in the 1700's and some adaptations of these that go back to the late 1600's have endured. Slang as a linguistic phenomenon endures, but specific slang items change quite quickly and they are deliberately changed. Slang is deliberate behavior. Slang is very different from the grammatical structures of the nonstandard dialect. These are out-of-awareness and involve different kinds of linguistic structures and often different kinds of perceptual mechanisms. They are not within the range of the user's manipulation because he isn't formally aware of what it is that he is doing. What the nonstandard speaker needs is techniques for learning to recognize the nature of and for acquiring the different kinds of linguistic structures which will be necessary, along with the competence in using them, to speak standard English. And that's not an easy job.

A Different Culture

Many features of nonstandard dialect are recurrent throughout the country in lower-class Negroes. And by lower class here I don't just mean poor; I mean a special cultural configuration, what the anthropologist would call a "different" culture. One of the things that's caused a survival of this kind of culture, even where it's socially disadvantageous insofar as opportunity capabilities of its carrier are concerned, is the containment policy on the part of the white community toward the Negroes. The lower-class Negro is certainly in many ways culturally quite different from general middle-class American society and even from lower-class whites in the same area. Moynihan was bitterly attacked when he wrote a study of lower-class Negro family structure pointing out that it was different; his point was misinterpreted by people who thought he was saying that it was all right because it was different. But his general point was quite valid that in many cases there are actually family structural differences and that there are kinship differences.

Social workers — white middle-class social workers who go to a lower-class Negro community — are often very confused in trying to find out what people's names are, who lives with whom, who's the parent of whom, and so on. When Africans came to the United States, they assimilated in part the white culture but not entirely. African social patterns that were brought to the United States were modified by slavery, were partially conformed to white social patterns, but not entirely. There were innovations and they survived in this changed form, but they were not entirely identical to the white norm behavior.

There are variations within the white behavior. Among descendants of Italian immigrants and among descendants of English immigrants, English stock or Scandinavian stock, the way of viewing the family is very different and there is a difference in family visiting patterns.

The Italians tend to regard as the family what the anthropologist and sociologist calls the "extended" family. This goes through various kinds of cousins several times removed from the direct, or "nuclear," family. The English-background descendants often prefer to limit their family interaction patterns to what is called the "nuclear" family, that is, the family that lives within the household and perhaps aunts and uncles. These attitudes go back to cultural differences in England and Italy on what the family is Each one, perhaps, will define the family in the same domain, but the real interaction patterns show that they've got two different concepts of family.

The American Negro who hasn't been too much in contact with standard American culture (and here I'm talking about standard culture as I'm talking about standard dialect) or too assimilated to it, often has a very different kind of family structure, and sometimes the kinship and family relationships are very foreign from any kind of European model. For example, one thing that I suspect is an African cultural survival deals with who your parent is. In Africa, if a child doesn't like his parents or loses his parents, he has a sort of right to go to another family and say, "I want to be your child." Then the child moves in and this is a quasi-legal kind of adoption where these people become the parents of that child and he becomes their child. African languages have a special name for this kind of a relationship, different from the word for *father* or *son*, etc. In lower-class American Negro communities, often the child lives with somebody who turns out not to be his real mother or his real aunt. Or he has play relationships very much like the sort of voluntary brother or sister relationships in some African societies, where two fellows who are friends become each other's brother, so to speak. The lower-class Negro community has a way of technically defining it; children, for example, often refer to these semi-legal relations by the "play" prefix. Somebody is your play-aunt, your play-uncle, your play-brother, your play-sister. I suspect that these kinship terms in lower-class Negro culture, *mother, father, brother, sister, aunt, uncle*, are false cognates with a kinship system of standard American culture where they appear to refer to the kinds of kinship and family structural relationships that occur in standard culture; in fact, they don't refer to these.

Standard and Nonstandard Dialects

When you look at nonstandard dialect, you can look at it in two ways. You can look at it, as many people do, as some sort of random variation of standard English, grammatical patterns and phonology and so on, or you can look at it as a coherent, structured, meaningful system of its own with its own historical background.

Some transformationalists expect dialects of the same language to be alike in deep structure and to differ only in very low level phonotactic rules. But if this substandard dialect is a coherent system of its own, in some ways it becomes difficult to describe the difference between this dialect and standard English in terms of a single deep structure.

Let me give you an example. In standard English, we have one way of indicating a predicate adjective and that's with a verb of being, in various forms of person and tense. In the nonstandard dialect, one way of predicating an adjective is without the verb *to be*. In nonstandard English you'd say *He busy*. But there is also another way of predicating an adjective in nonstandard English and that's with the verb *be*, as in *He be busy*. If you look from standard English logic at the situations in which you say *He busy* or *He be busy*, this is clearly free variation. But if you consider the situations in which this sort of thing occurs and forget about standard English for a minute, the nonstandard dialect has worked on the basis of a rationale or logic not found in standard English at all. That is, the nonstandard speaker, in making his decision about predicate adjectives, has to scan the real world situation he's describing and incorporate for the purposes of his grammatical structure information which the standard speaker doesn't have to.

In dialect, the rule works this way: if it is a short-term state, an immediate situation, it is zero predication — *He busy right now;* if it is a long-term state, habitual action, it is *He be busy all the time*. A nonstandard speaker in Washington, D.C., will reject as nongrammatical — this has nothing to do with standard English — an utterance like *He busy all the time*, and he will say only *He be busy all the time*. He will reject as ungrammatical an utterance like *He be busy right now*. Now here is grammatical judgment; here is a rejection of nongrammatical forms and acceptance of grammatical forms quite outside the realm of what standard English does or doesn't do.

If somebody says to Johnny, "Why doesn't your uncle come and visit us today?" *Because he busy* would be the answer.

"Johnny, why is it that your uncle never comes to visit us?" *Because he be busy*.

In standard English we would say *Because he's busy* in both cases.

The dialect speaker scans the situation and he's got something extra to take into account. He's got to take into account short-term state and durative long-term state and incorporate it into grammatical structure.

The standard speaker has other things he has to incorporate into grammatical structure; for example, he has to incorporate person-number accord, *He is busy*, *I am busy*, *You are busy*, etc. The nonstandard speaker has time, too — *He been busy* as opposed to *He was busy*, and so on — that he incorporates, but the standard speaker has to incorporate pure person predication morphophonemics into his system. A nonstandard speaker doesn't and he has also to scan the real world situation. It seems to me that since this involves knowledge about the real world, it lies at a very deep level of grammatical structure and, therefore, the nonstandard and standard can't be described in terms of a single deep structure if this type of difference is to be incorporated. Nonstandard dialect can behave in terms of its own logic, logic which at times is somewhat foreign to standard English. Sometimes, however, the overt form looks like something we think we know in standard English; in fact, we don't.

Let me give you an example. Two forms in French are called presentatives: *Voici* and *voila*, historically from the verb *voir*, to see, and then *ici* and *la*, meaning *here* and *there*, have nothing to do with the verb *voir* in French today. They are entirely independent forms, presentatives used to call the attention of the listener to the existence of something either near the speaker or remote from the speaker.

The child nonstandard dialect in Washington has presentatives, too. Like the French presentatives, they historically come from verbs that could mean other things but don't any more. To the form *There go the book on the table* (There is the book on the table) or *Here go the book* (Here is the book) the standard-speaking teacher might say, "Johnny, I don't see the book going anywhere." The book isn't going anywhere. *There go*, *here go* are just presentatives which call the attention of the listener to the existence of something. The teacher is correct in singling this out as a deviation from standard English, but the teacher has to be careful about assessing what the nature of deviation is. A correction like "Johnny, the book isn't going anywhere" is a misevaluation of the nature of the linguistic event that has just occurred and is a misevaluation of what's going on in the child's head and in his linguistic generative mechanism. Without the sophistication to evaluate exactly, the teacher must use a great deal of caution in a correction device.

As I talk to researchers in other communities throughout the country, recursive dialect features in Negro communities become more and more evident. If, in fact, it turns out that nonstandard dialects in Negro communities all over the country are like each other, it may also turn out that they're different from the surrounding kinds of white English, standard or nonstandard, and even from the nonstandard English of socioeconomically comparable white levels. We have suspected that the tests developed for testing the verbal skill of the nonstandard child have really been biased against him in assuming that his nonstandard dialect is just a minor deviation of standard English.

Substandard Dialects and Testing

A psychologist gave some lower-class Negro kids from Washington the Peterson picture-word correlation test and noticed that on verbs they scored quite low. She developed some theory that they were better on concrete noun handling than on verb action handling, and she then developed some ecological theory about why this is so. By the way, in digression let me point out that if there's anything dangerous — although it doesn't sound dangerous — if there's anything that's really dangerous for their own ends, it's the stress of the social actionist that the differences between Negroes and whites are purely ecological. That's very self-satisfying too if one wants to sort of say, "Well, we're all alike," but to me there's a built-in danger in this sort of approach.

The social actionist developed a very elaborate theory that the ecology of lower-class living had warped the perspective of these kids and that they were good at concrete noun thinking but not good at abstract verb action thinking. How can somebody not be good at abstract thinking when he can make a distinction between short-term and long-term state in adjective construction? Let's look at this linguistically and see if, in fact, several things are involved. First, if the objects and the actions are culturally unfamiliar to the individual taking the test, we are testing his culture and not his psychological perspective. And, if the thing is culturally familiar to the person taking the test, he may not call it by the same name the testers do.

Suppose I have a picture of a man with his hand on something on a wall and something down on the bottom says *switch* or *turn*. Washington kids don't *switch* or *turn* a light off, they *cut* it on or off. There's no question of a verb deficiency; they just use a different verb. Many performance tests that are given to socioeconomically disadvantaged kids (be they lower-class Negroes, be they Mexican-Americans, be they Alaskan-Indians or any other kind of Indians in the United States, be they any other group that you find — Caucasians or Appalachian poor whites, or Okies and Arkies) many times end up not testing; end up, really, pointing out that there is a cultural difference but calling it a deficiency of the kids, in the sense that they're tested by us in terms of consensus culture or standard culture and standard language and consensus language. They test the child and he fails. (Obviously, he's failing something.) The test works, in fact, as a test of deviation from standard culture or standard language.

What these tests don't often succeed at, however, is bringing out the kinds of things that they are intended to test. The Peterson test, for example, didn't test at all the verbal ability, or verb usage ability, of these slum kids. To me it seems very important that for purposes of testing and for purposes of speech remediation and dialect correction, we have to develop at least some knowledge of what the nonstandard dialect we are dealing with is and what the nonstandard culture we are dealing with is like, and how these differ from the standard dialect and culture. We should then work in terms of these differences.

A lot is said about the lower-class "loose" (and this means "not the standard culture definition of family") family structure among lower-class Negroes but little about the rather tight age-grading structures among lower-class Negro boys where age-grade differences are extremely important. Go into a lower-class Negro community, get some boys just about any age below 19; ask them to list their friends and then ask them the last names of their friends. You'll get lots of blanks. Then ask them the ages of their friends, and they'll give you the age of every kid in the neighborhood that they have any contact with at all. Age-grading is an extremely important social device in lower-class Negro culture, particularly among boys. Dress differences, grammatical behavior, play pattern, communication patterns, and norms of politeness and etiquette — all these correlate with age-grading. Here's a device of social organization that doesn't happen to match very closely anything that strong or that well organized in standard culture; people just don't look at it.

Politeness Tags

We must take a good close look at what is going on with the people that we are trying to deal with. This is true for lower-class Negroes, for Mexican-Americans or any group that we want to work with, including Shenandoah Valley mountain whites who also have culture norms of their own. They may not be so drastically different as lower-class Negro culturally deprived from the standard, and they may not be preserved as long after migration into cities because there isn't as much containment, but there are cultural differences just the same. It's to the teacher's advantage to see these and know what they are. Very minor differences sometimes cause big misunderstandings. One of the frequent complaints that I hear by whites about Negroes is that they're rude. One of the white culture things that defines politeness is *please*. This magic word in middle-class American white culture is one of its main politeness tags and one of the first things that parents who edit child speech deal with. In lower-class Negro culture this word is quite rare. These kids are taught — this happens with southern whites, too, so it may be just a general southern culture thing — to say *sir* to elders, and slum kids usually say *sir* to elders. This doesn't get noticed, but the fact that they don't say *please* does get noticed and they get a bad mark. If you start looking for politeness tags, you find two things. First, *man* is used as a politeness tag. *Give me the book* is much less polite than *Man, give me the book*. Second, a slight intonational rise is also a politeness tag, so that *That'll be fifty cents* as a request for payment is not so polite as *That'll be fifty cents!* The dialect uses not the word *please*, but an intonational *please;* it isn't the morpheme but an intonation. As a matter of fact, when you tell kids they're not being polite, often they're confused because they had a vague idea they were in fact being polite. And then the white gets judged as hostile or aggressive when really he just misunderstands. Why don't we ask, "Now let's see, there are probably politeness devices in this culture — there are in most cultures — what would they be?" Observing a situation and seeing how people are polite to each other is very important. This politeness indicator doesn't correspond exactly to standard English *please*. Standard English uses the politeness tag only for a command or a request. The nonstandard politeness tag can be put not only in commands or requests but on the plain statement to soften it. A West African pidgin English or creole English called Krio, spoken in Sierra Leone primarily in the Freetown area and related historically to Gullah and the American slave pidgin, has an intonational politeness tag just like this. It is possibly a survival from an early North American slave pidgin politeness tag which was intonational.

Sierra Leone Krio has it and Sierra Leoneans know, when they're speaking standard English, that it corresponds to *please* because they know the Englishman says *please* in his requests. What they don't know is that it only corresponds to *please* in requests and commands and that it isn't used in anything else. They put *please* wherever they've been using their politeness intonation.

A Sierra Leonean who doesn't know English very well will say "Good morning, please." "How are you, please?" "It's a nice day, please." He just uses *please* as a direct structural equivalent of his politeness intonation. The important thing to recognize is that there are politeness indicators but that they are structurally different.

Syntactical Features

Let me show you some of the syntactical features of these nonstandard dialects. I've mentioned the noncopula and the non-*s* possessive in *This John book* for *This is John's book*.

The grammatical mechanism of the dialect for making possession is apposition, so *John* and *book* just get put side by side: *This John book*. *Mr. Jones* gets put beside *book*: *This Mr. Jones book*. It's a grammatical structure and not phonological. Deciding what's a phonological problem or what's a grammatical problem requires a sophistication. Sometimes it is a mixture of both. Often there are phonological rules, for example, which apply to grammatical constructions and both are deviants from standard English. So then it may be either a grammatical deviation or a phonological deviation or really both.

One of the very nice things that a teacher can do to train himself in approaching people who are culturally different is to observe how they are polite functionally within the area of linguistics. How do they predicate nouns, adjectives? How do they show possession? How do they show comparative adjective structure? How do they form their tenses? How do they modify modally? How do they qualify nouns with adjectives?

These are functional things. How does the child start an utterance, how does he pause, what does he do when he pauses as though he's thinking about something, how does he ask questions? Question intonation is very susceptible to misunderstanding because it can be very different in different dialects. The question intonation in the Washington nonstandard dialect starts with a high start and has a rapid fall. In standard English, a common question intonation starts with a low middle and has a rise at the end. *Did you find the book?* Now, in standard English, the drop at the end in a question shows a very abrupt sort of extra surprise or irritation; and therefore questions by nonstandard speakers are often very much misunderstood. Employers think a kid is rude or overexcitable when he uses an intonation like this not understanding that in reality it is just a usual question intonation.

How people pluralize and where and when is very important. In standard English, for example, we put plurals on certain things and not on others, and we generally correlate it with how many there are. In some varieties of English and nonstandard kinds of dialect, people don't pluralize a noun if they've got something else already pluralized. They say, for example, *I got four bruvver* for *I've got four brothers*, because *four* already takes care of the pluralization. But they say *It belong to my bruvvers (It belongs to my brothers);* nothing shows that it's plural there. They have a plural marker when there is no count word like "many" or any of these pluralizing things co-occurring with a noun. The rules for pluralization are different; there are a dozen different ways to pluralize. If there were a spokesman for nonstandard dialect, he would ask, "Why do you say the plural of *brother* when you've already said *four?*" The dialect just works differently.

How do they form conditional and *if* clauses? One way is with *if* but another way involves subject-verb inversion, putting the pronoun after modals, for example. *Are you sure can he go? I don't know did he do it* is very common in dialect.

Contrastive Studies

What you can do is develop your own little contrastive studies where you plot out how standard English does it and how the dialect does it, and then you can teach on the basis of those differences and tell the kids about the differences. They'll be fascinated, I assure you. I've had great success teaching kids about the nature of their own dialect. I got a great glow of recognition from them when I explained the parallel between the use of their *y'all* as opposed to *you* and the French *vous* as opposed to *tu: vous* is plural and polite to a single person, *y'all* is plural and polite to a single person; *tu* is familiar and used only to a single person, and the same is true with *you.* And never have I heard a French teacher make use in the Washington City French classes of this fascinating correlation between the local dialect and standard French.

Sometimes teachers find it useful to use the dialect, to hold the dialect form in some areas to progress in other areas where they want the child to concentrate his problem-solving activities.

This system works because one of the first problems in learning to read is learning what we call phoneme-grapheme-morpheme correspondences. The child knows what the sounds mean but can't always recognize the letters that represent the sounds — that's what his reading problem is. It's quite a complex problem — he's got to figure out what these marks on the piece of paper represent in the way of sounds he knows and particularly what this whole thing taken together represents in the way of words that he knows. One good way for him to do this is to look at the whole sentence. He can get a good idea of what the not easily recognized words mean and then he can problem-solve. He can tell generally what the gist of a sentence is if it's close to his own syntax. If it's not close to his syntax, then he has to define what it means and he can't concentrate on the sound-meaning word correspondences. His problem-solving activities are too diffused. If you can maintain his syntax and let him concentrate on the word spellings, then he can concentrate on the primary problem of what sounds the letters stand for. Later on you can worry about the syntax.

This is a technique that you can develop quite easily by getting your kids to dictate stories to you in their own speech. Take it down in standard English spelling but preserve rigorously the syntax, grammar, and the vocabulary, and if the child uses a word in a way that you think is wrong, put it down anyway because he probably uses it correctly from his point of view. You develop his text and then you will have the children learn to read from those. Because they meet no unfamiliar vocabulary, they can concentrate directly on the thing at hand.

The history of language development in Western Europe and in the Arab countries shows that in spite of all the descriptions of Latin and classical Arabic that were written, vernaculars and dialects replaced them both. Describing a linguistic system does nothing to preserve it if other social linguistic dynamics are not aimed at preserving it. If a linguistic system is destined to die out, it's going to die out in spite of your descriptions; and if it isn't going to die, it is going to survive in spite of your not describing it. As a result I see nothing dangerous in talking about the nature of nonstandard dialect to kids that use nonstandard dialect. On the contrary, I gain an understanding that they have a system in which they know how to think and express themselves.

Be very careful in teaching standard English structure, even to a child. Some things you can point out to children and get an immediate response. When you do, drill on it; then later on do pattern practice and anything else that helps. A child may deny that he does some of these things formally; he may say, "Well, I don't do this. My brother does, but I don't do this." Let him deny he doesn't do it because people often aren't aware of what they do and don't do.

Be careful in evaluating the child who sometimes communicates and sometimes doesn't communicate. What he does is often a matter of social situation and social structure relationships between him and the person who's communicating with him as well as of his own language capability. A very talkative kid can be very silent in an unfamiliar situation or in a situation in which age-grading instructions are taking place. A lot of kids are silent in a classroom because of two situations. One is that there is no culturally analogous situation to the classroom in their own local culture so the classroom is a really foreign situation. The other is that children often don't talk to adult teachers because they are adults, and in lower-class Negro culture, communication patterns are different not only in dialect but also in who talks to whom and who talks back and why. For example, I have seen mothers actually work through an intermediary, the older sibling, to get at younger kids; the pattern is that strict. In Negro families the mother talks a lot, but often the child doesn't talk back. If he does, it is with a limited kind of utterance or through the sibling intermediary. And I've seen this survive right into middle-class Negro families where we see all sorts of chores age-graded. In other words, if you can't understand why these kids aren't saying anything, try to find out whether the situation is foreign to them. These are things you look at: If kids are quiet, are they quiet because they really are verbally disfluent or are they quiet because there's something different about the social structure?

It seems to me one of the best ways to change people culturally is by understanding the nature of what it is that they are doing now and what it is that you want them to end up doing or want them to at least have the ability to do. It is important — not to force a change on anybody; just make it possible for them to make the change. A lot of debate is going on about whether we should stamp out nonstandard dialect or whether we should preserve it.

Suppose you are teaching Spanish. Your job is to make him fluent in the use of Spanish when he wants to use it. Where he uses English and Spanish outside of the classroom is his concern. Why not do that with standard English? What you want to do is to give to the child skill in the use of standard English. The English teacher's job is to impart skill in the use of standard English to the child so that when and where he needs it, or when and where society suddenly tells him, "Look, you've got to use it," he can have recourse to this skill. This decision has to be made about language and about other kinds of cultural phenomena. If the child wants to use bluffing behavior in establishing social rapport with other boys, that's his business. But we need to teach him standard norms of politeness for when he gets jobs and when he interacts with people outside his own social group. This point of view works for culture as well as it works for language, which is also part of culture.

Linguistics and Reading

Alarm over the fact that many children in Philadelphia—as in all big cities—were not achieving desirable success in reading prompted Mrs. Wilson to re-examine her school system's reading materials. This began her interest in linguistics and, with the help of several outstanding authorities in the field, she employed linguistic principles in setting up a new program for the teaching of reading. Not only are the children now reading better, Mrs. Wilson states, they are also writing better.

ROSEMARY G. WILSON

Unhappily, in the big cities we are not achieving the kinds of success with reading with all of our children from elementary school through high school that we would like. The degree of retardation is almost appalling in certain situations in our own cities. Therefore, I felt that we couldn't be complacent about what was going on and we had to decide whether any changes to be made should be in favor of a new approach.

It did seem to me that one thing we had to look at critically was: What methods are we using to teach children? Was it true that all young children learn to read successfully using only one approach through a basal reader? Undoubtedly, many children had learned to read very well but what about this big group that didn't seem to be catching on using these particular techniques? I decided that perhaps the one thing that we ought to look at very carefully was what materials we were using and whether there were certain materials that are better for some children than for others at this initial stage.

That began my interest, actually, in how we could use some linguistic principles to teach reading, particularly to young children.

My interest in linguistics lay in the fact that it represented scholarship in the field of language. I felt that if I wanted to do something new and ask teachers to do something that was different, I had better be on very firm ground about our source of information. And, of course, the linguists know our language. They know how it is structured, they know how it operates, and it seemed to me this was a firm basis from which to take off on anything that was new and different.

Primacy of the Oral Language

The first basic principle that has great relevance to the field of reading as well as to the other aspects of the teaching of English is the linguists' expression of the importance of oral language and what they call the primacy of the oral language. It is difficult to dispute their contention that oral language is primary when they point out that there are still more people in the world today that have no written language than there are people who have a written language.

The linguist says, "It is in the oral language that meaning lies."

This condensation was made by Vincent D. Malin of the Bureau of Publications of a tape recording of Mrs. Wilson's presentation to the Linguistic Workshop conducted by the Baltimore City Public Schools, August 8-26, 1966. Mrs. Wilson retains the copyright on this material and has given the Bureau of Publications permission to print this condensation in the *Baltimore Bureau of Education.*

It's quite apparent that of the children who are severely retarded in reading, the clinic-type cases, many are very, very good in their oral communication. They not only express themselves well but understand quite well what is said to them on an adult level. And some of them can do this on a very high level of material when their actual reading level itself may be back at second- or third-reader level, but adult material can be read to them and they have no problem at all if it is in the oral area. So, there is something very important about the fact that the meaning lies in the oral language.

As far as reading and structure in reading materials is concerned, this oral language is basic. To have the greatest success with a retarded reader, only those words which are already in his language should be used. Then no concept development is necessary. This is the problem presented by many basal reading materials to children from very poor environments. Many of those words that appear in the pre-primers and primers are simply not in the oral language of our children. They've never had those experiences; they've never seen those particular types of toys. They can't identify a scooter because they have never seen one before, they've never used it, they have no label for that particular thing. To eliminate one possibility of failure in early reading, words that are in the oral language of the children should be put into the beginning of those stories. Then there is no problem of concept development. This process frees the child to concentrate on a very few basic things at the beginning level and it seems to be working.

Alphabetic Nature of The English Language

I'd like to go on to the second idea which linguists have given to us which is of great importance in the teaching of reading and that is the alphabetic nature of the English language.

There is a great deal of research on the fact that children who are taught the letters of the alphabet and how to discriminate between one letter and another at an early stage are farther ahead in reading — no matter what the approach may be — than children who are not. It's interesting to me that all children, no matter their background, need this kind of direct teaching.

One authority has said that trying to teach reading without teaching the letters of the alphabet is rather like trying to teach arithmetic without teaching the Arabic numerals.

In Western European cultures there are some highly phonetic languages in the sense that their writing systems have a symbol for every word in the language.

If a language has complete consistency of phoneme-grapheme relationships, a child can learn to read rather easily because he has no decisions to make. But when a language has certain letters representing as many as 9 or 10 different phonemes, which is the case with English, then not in the spoken language but in the written language do children in many words have a decision to make. This, of course, is why linguists are so opposed, I think, to the basic premise of phonics, which is the attaching of a sound to an individual letter. It would chill the blood of any linguist to think that a sound can be attached to a letter. It's the reverse that they're interested in. If a child is asked to give the sound of the letter *a* he might reply, "Which of nine or ten sounds of *a* would you like?" In other words, there is no such thing as the sound of *a* because it's in the context of a word that it has a sound value that it represents in that particular word. So this is one basic difference between a phonic approach and a linguistic one; the words are always presented as whole words as close to their usual pronunciation as we can get them.

The next thing to keep in mind is to think about the alphabet and the particular letters which present the greatest reading problem. The linguists have told us that 13 of the consonants of our alphabet have great consistency as far as the sounds which they represent. It seems to me that it's important for teachers to know that the consonants do not present the real reading problem in our written language. But they dwell on the consonants at tremendous length. They are following the manuals of the basal series, for those begin with consonants as the beginning sound. They never seem to get beyond the beginning consonant in their word analysis.

It's quite obvious that the vowel letters of the language are the ones that present the reading problems because they do stand in the context of the words for so many different phonemes. They take up the slack on these 44 sounds versus 26 letters. And yet, in one basal series the teacher is not told to do anything about vowel analysis and word attack until Reader 2-1, not the second preprimer but Reader 2-1!

This is a very long time to wait to tell children what to do about analyzing the vowels in our language because every word has at least one vowel and some of the very horrible ones have several vowels. The really bad ones have the vowel clusters, as the linguist calls them, where two vowels coming together present a really great reading difficulty to the children.

Spelling System of English

The question is whether or not all of this is a hopeless situation. Here I feel linguistics has offered us a tremendous amount of help through the analysis of the spelling system of English. This is the basis of Fries' work. In fact, his approach is often called a "spelling pattern approach." It recognizes immediately the importance of having children learn something about the vowels and how to attack words on the basis of analyzing the way in which those vowels are used in certain spellings.

The linguists have said, particularly Henry Lee Smith, that 85 percent of the words in the English language are regularly spelled but, unfortunately, the 15 percent that are irregularly spelled are used about 85 percent of the time. All the linguists, beginning with Bloomfield, have by their analysis of the words in our language in their written form very clearly explained what the spelling patterns of our language are. And Fries has divided the words of the language into three major spelling patterns and a number of minor ones. The highly irregular words that don't form patterns are few in number compared to those that follow regular spelling patterns. This would be interesting, I think, in teaching at any level.

The First Spelling Pattern

There are three spelling patterns on which our own materials are based. The first one Fries calls a "major spelling pattern" because more words follow this pattern than any other pattern in the language. This is the consonant-vowel-consonant pattern, traditionally called the *short vowel*, occurring in such words as *pin*, *pet*, and *cat*. This not only forms a base for the three-letter words which we begin to teach little children to read but, if those words are extended with consonants on either side, gives quite lengthy words without getting out of the first spelling pattern for short vowels. One of the longest words still in the first spelling pattern is the word *twelfth*, where there are a number of consonants on either side of the short vowel. With younger children, of course, we do not get into extensions of words that rapidly.

This first major spelling pattern, then, is presented to children in the beginning readers. We attack the vowels immediately but we do it by always giving children words which are consistently pronounced and spelled. We do not ask them to cope with vowels in all kinds of values right at the beginning. The idea is to give them security in reading; then we gradually begin to feed in a lot of the irregularly spelled words. For example, we might have a little sentence as this in a pre-primer: "Come to me." Here we have an *o* in a rather unusual representation of a phoneme, an *o* that represents a quite different phoneme from the usual one, and a "long *e*" in *me*, in what makes a small pattern of words. We can't very well teach word attack at the early levels when so many different varieties of vowels are presented very quickly to the boys and girls. So what we have evolved following Fries' patterns is that in our first reader we give the children only words having the medial vowel of *a* in the value that we traditionally call a *short vowel*. The idea is that in the presentation of these patterns the children will get great security in reading itself. They are also dealing with words which are perfectly regular on phoneme-grapheme correspondence, such as the word *cat*. This has a one-to-one correspondence, three phonemes and three letters.

The only way in which we could get some of the irregularly spelled words in our materials was to put in a few high-frequency structure words in order to get another linguistic principle into play, which is normal sentence patterns. But normal sentence patterns don't develop without parts of the verb "to be" and some prepositions and pronouns, and so on. Our first sentence is a very simple one — "Nat is a cat." Nat is the name of the cat in our series.

The Second Spelling Pattern

What Fries has designated as the second major spelling pattern of the language is those words that pattern on a silent *e*, which in English has a value in the lengthening of the preceding vowel. Once the children have learned to read with fluency in the first pattern, they are introduced to this second pattern which will give them hundreds of additional words, this introduction completely by contrast with the first spelling pattern. When they can read with accuracy such a word as *cap*, in the second spelling pattern the children see *cape*. And in this kind of approach the entire word should always be presented to the child. Ask them to read it. The contrast practically teaches itself. Use *mat* and *mate* as an example and the children will want to tell what this word *mate* is. They can almost read it without ever having seen it before, which is true of many words as they are read in context. This goes very rapidly and this second spelling pattern almost does not have to be taught by the time the groundwork has been laid with the first.

The Third Spelling Pattern

The third major spelling pattern is, to me, the great clue as far as retarded readers are concerned. It is the pattern which presents the greatest reading problem: the vowel cluster, the two vowels which represent one phoneme. Words containing the clusters, however, do make smaller patterns and this is the way they are presented to the children — the *ea*'s, the *ei*'s, the *ie*'s, the words which don't yield to phonetic analysis. There's no way that you can take a word like *read* and by separating the *e* and *a* and giving them separate sounds come up with *read*. It doesn't work that way in English. It's the spelling convention which children have to recognize as such, and not necessarily consciously. Now, this is the first, real opening wedge that I have had in all the years I've worked with retarded readers and teachers of retarded readers that will give children some real help in how to handle vowel cluster and vowel digraph words. As I have said, phonics doesn't help on this but linguistics does: the linguist has worked out these patterns. There is the *ea* in the *spread-thread-read* pattern and there is the *ea* in *seat* and *mean*, and so on, where it has another value. And by bringing in context, the child can almost always, if he only has two possibilities, know what that word should be, what it really is in that particular sentence.

Minor Spelling Patterns

Fries also introduces a number of what he calls "the minor spelling patterns," and certain words that he calls *once-ers* which don't pattern at all. These are certain irregularly spelled words. The word *of*, for example, he calls a *once-er* since there isn't any other spelling that approximates it. There are many *once-ers* and some have a very high frequency of use but they usually present no difficulty.

Minimum Contrasts

There are two important points that I'd like to make. One is that the way in which the children recognize different words is entirely based on what Fries calls the principle of minimum contrasts. In other words, the minimum contrast is having two words in which only one letter is different. And his theory is that children learn to read well not by seeing how words are alike but by seeing how one word is different from another word. So that when we present the first pattern that we had, the *at* matrix, we present two words such as *cat* and *fat*. With these first two words, whether the child is a retarded reader or not, the contrast has to start, this habit of looking for contrast is basic to the approach.

The Linguist's View Of Reading and Pictures

Too many children think that reading is somehow tied up with looking at pictures and guessing what words are underneath. And then they say that they can read; they can read correctly something they've memorized under a picture, but when asked to turn to another page and read another sentence there, they will repeat the same sentence. They are not really into the reading process. They've got entirely the wrong idea of what reading is, that is, looking at the printed word itself and then getting it back into oral language. But there are children who learn despite these pictures. I guess, more than anything, this point can be illustrated by a very little boy whom I asked if he wanted to read to me, an academic question for him. He said he would read from the pre-primer. He opened to the first page which was a double picture spread, the usual suburban house. Down in the corner was the word *home*. So I said to him, "Would you read that word for me?" I don't know whether he even looked at the word, but he immediately said, "House." I said, "What else can you read?" So he went to another picture of a huge red barn and down in the corner was the word *farm*. I know he didn't look at it this time. I said, "What is that word?" And he said, "Barn." Now this really makes me heartsick because here is a child at the end of first grade who already is entirely mistaken about what reading is. He doesn't know what it is to read. He looks at the picture. He says what he thinks that picture represents. He never looked at the word which is the reading part of the whole business.

Linguistic readers have no pictures at all and this is the basic linguistic principle that I'd like to emphasize now. Looking at pictures has nothing to do with learning to read.

What we do in Philadelphia is to have the children draw their own pictures for these readers and we have gotten some very nice creative artwork — after the children read the story. And we can do this also in upper levels. What we do is say, "Now that you've read the story to yourself, draw a picture but you've got to put in that picture everything you read about in the story." So, if Dad and Dan and Nat are in the story, we want to see Dad, Dan, and Nat doing whatever they were doing in the story. This is a wonderful comprehension check as well as an encouragement of creativity.

Reading for Meaning

Some critics, who I think really haven't gone into what is behind the structuring of materials such as this, say that linguists aren't interested in reading for meaning. I don't know how much reading for meaning we do in pre-primers, but, in any event, the linguist could not be more interested. Fries says very definitely that there is meaning in a word, and that there is more meaning in that word in the context of a sentence. The real meaning however comes with a sequence of sentences — actually one adding to another idea. In our beginning stories, simple though they are, we have a sequence of ideas. We have as our first sentence, *Nat is a cat*, which is a statement of fact in a normal sentence pattern. Next in sequence is *Nat is fat*, which adds something to the picture, and the final sentence is *Nat is a fat cat*, which brings together the first two sentences into a sequence. We get into more complicated ones, something which is not true of other reading materials.

Stages in Reading

Something else about linguistics and reading appealed to me. Fries talks about the first stage of the reading process as being the "transfer stage," the stage at which the child is actually transferring his oral language into the written language or vice versa. It's a question of what he knows in his oral language, recognizing it in written language, and being able to read it as easily as he speaks it, which, of course, is our goal as teachers of reading. This transfer stage can go on for quite a while or it can be very brief because it goes into the second stage, which Fries describes as "the stage of productive reading," a very happy term, I think. This is what we're aiming for: productive reading. I think it's an all-encompassing term. A child can read productively for information; he can read productively for enjoyment, for appreciation. And it's what we hope our children, all of them, will be able to do.

The third stage which, unhappily, many of our children never reach is the stage of vivid, imaginative realization, the high level reading that we are aiming for, critical reading of all kinds, the level at which we hope the children will function. The tragedy about retardation in reading is that we have many children in the secondary schools who are in the transfer stage. They are not reading productively in any sense of the word. No one can read productively until he has the mechanics of reading under control. A child who is not able to apply word attack skills will be stymied on so many words that he will remain in the first stage. But if a child is reading well and with understanding, he is reading productively, even at a very immature level as far as subject matter is concerned. But a rather slow progression at the beginning seems to pay off in the end, as far as I can tell, because I think sometimes in other systems, the children are expected to do too much too soon. They are expected to be high level readers before they've even found out what reading is. That's why we get some of our retarded readers.

Writing Aspects of a Reading Program

Talking about the writing aspect of such a reading program will give secondary teachers some concept of what can be done in creative writing with children if a linguistic base is used.

We begin the creative writing — and we can do this with secondary students as well— in a very simple way by the use of the beginning pattern. One day, with a class of children from varied ethnic and racial backgrounds, I scrambled the first sentence in the reader and made it read, *Nat cat a is.* I asked the children to read it to make sure that they could read every word. I asked, "Does this make sense to you?" I've had no class, I don't care how immature, where the children did not say, "No, it doesn't make any sense at all." Nor did this particular group of children, whose many problems make us think of them as practically unteachable for the first year, believe it made sense.

Then I asked, "Now, suppose you take those words and you put them in the order that you think will make sense."

The first response I got was, "A cat is Nat," which almost floored me. Of course this is a perfectly good English sentence.

I said, "Fine. Who can give me another arrangement of the words?"

The next child said, "Is Nat a cat." And again, I said, "Wonderful." We didn't get the simple, straightforward "Nat is a cat" until the third time. But out of this little group of words we got three arrangements which do make sense in English.

It is very interesting to linguists that these children who we think are so culturally and linguistically deprived have, as the linguists say, "internalized the structure of their language." Nobody's ever told these children that word order is important in the English language; they know one order doesn't make sense, but that if they turn these words around, it will make a lot of sense. We use this technique of the scrambled sentence constantly with the children and they become very expert. They love doing it and they can scramble sentences for the other children.

With the very beginning of writing, the teacher starts the children on sentences. The teacher prints in blue, *Dad taps,* for example. Then each child finishes the sentence. I have suggested to my junior high teachers that they give these children who are, shall we say, reluctant writers, a start at this early level and finish one sentence for them, such as *Dad taps the tin can.* Then a child might say something entirely different, using the words that he's had from his readers. *The tin lid,* the teacher wrote in one class, and the child wrote *is big* after it. And then, *Dan ran to* and another child wrote *Dad. Dad wins* was finished by *a pin for Dan.* This is from a story the child had read. He's using the material of the story at the beginning. Very soon they won't need any start, but I think it would be very good to pull junior high school students into writing by supplying something and letting them finish it in different ways which, believe me, they will do at the junior high level.

Very often at the early stages, after they've had a spelling pattern, we give the children the pattern and say, "See how many words of this pattern you can use in a story." Some results are rather interesting. One rather bright little boy took the *ink* pattern and wrote:

"Dad has a pink ink can. He cannot open the can, so Dad goes to the sink. He opens the can. Mother goes to the kitchen with her mink to get a drink. Mother said, 'What stinks? I think the ink stinks.' "

We encourage humor, and the children roll on the floor at these stories. They do like to read what other children have written.

As an English teacher at various school levels I've been amazed at the complexity of the sentences written by these younger children, which is greater than I've found in sentences from children as high as the tenth grade. In a first grade situation in one of the poorer neighborhoods, this paper was handed in by a child. It is called "Fun After School."

"When we come home from school, I do my homework before I go to play with the boys."

The teacher, of course, has carefully put in the comma. We don't think it is necessary at the first grade to teach this kind of punctuation. Now this child's sentence, even without the comma, to me is a remarkable sentence, an original sentence, and perfectly spelled, written by a first-grade child who in some schools might be asked to read such things as, "Look, look, look." The sophistication of these children in their ability to handle sentences is impressive. And, as I'm sure you realize, there's no relation between what children are actually saying and the language that they are being given to read at the beginning stages. The complexity of that first-grader's sentence shows many layers of structure, of different ideas, of subordinate ideas. We don't usually get such complex sentences written by our tenth-grade students, let alone our first-grade students.

I like to think that because the children have been reading stories where the sentences are sequential and not disjointed they write sequential sentences.

Here is a second-grade story which I like to read because everyone generally finds it quite remarkable as to content and subject matter. The children were shown a picture and asked to write. We all use that as a technique right up through high school. This one is called, "The Baby Wants His Mother."

"I think the baby is crying because his mother works every day and he never gets to see her all day. He only sees his father. He likes his mother much better. When she comes home very late at night, her husband never gets to see her, either. The parents both work. The parents take him to neighbors. He doesn't like it so that is why he cries every day."

The content makes quite a paper for a second-grade child to write. What this girl's paper says reveals a great deal. And we see very interesting sentence structure in "When she comes home very late at night," (the child herself had a comma) "her husband never gets to see her either."

There's quite a lot of development in this second-grade story, and this is the kind of writing that we can get, that many children are able to do. We believe that linguistics helps us teach children to read better, and therefore they can write better.

Mankind, A Perpetual Word Mill

English possesses a sort of built-in automatic word-making device through which, once a word is in the language, speakers can make related words. Once we have *American*, anybody can devise *un-American, pro-American, anti-American, Americanism, Americanize*, and *Americanization*. Such coinages become possible through a large body of prefixes and suffixes, which can attach freely to almost any word to produce a new but related meaning.

Obviously the fact that objects need names has something to do with making language. The *English Channel* is a name, but, once the name is given, it can give rise to *channel weather, a channel sea;* the *Panama Canal* can lead to the *Canal Zone*, and with military personnel to a *Canal appointment.*

Many other quirks of human minds and society produce words. Just now Americans are making words out of letters. *Ok* has become *okay;* a combination of nations can be NATO or *Nato*. We like to fuse words, particularly if they overlap, *motor hotel* becoming *motel*. Sometimes these combinations become ridiculous, like the tiny grocery store whose owners called it a *super-ette*. Words like *motel*—or the more recent *boatel*—are known as *blends* in this country.

Charlton Laird, *Thinking About Language* (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), pp. 33-34.

Linguistics and Writing

The material for this structural grammar lesson is taken from the first three lessons in Chapter 10 of Mr. Schuster's book.* The subject matter is modification around a noun—the way words fit around a noun. It deals with parts of speech in an untraditional way.

EDGAR H. SCHUSTER

This first lesson is going to have to do with the way some words cluster around other words to affect their meaning one way or another. Let's pretend that this circle I'm drawing represents all the girls in the world. Sometimes we want to talk about all the girls in the world and other times we want to talk about fewer girls. For example, we might want to talk only about tall girls. Assuming that half the girls in the world are tall, let's cut our circle in half.

So this is one way we could alter the word *girls* to narrow down its meaning. [Mr. Schuster drew a circle, labeling it *girls*. Then he bisected it, marking one half *tall girls*. He continued to narrow the area, step by step.]

We might end up with *some tall, smiling, brunette Campfire girls who were talking to me last night*. The meaning keeps getting more and more narrow until it becomes quite specific. Now let's think about how words behave when they're clustered around a head word like *girls*. Let's change the head word to *dog*. Use *dog* as the head word and let me have a word which will stand either in front of or behind that word and narrow it down somehow. Now, what kind of dog?

Child: A *big* dog.

Mr. Schuster: Big dog is one way of doing it. How about another word that will tell something about *dog?*

C: Spotted.

[Mr. Schuster continued until he had listed *big, spotted, brown, fierce, greyhound, short-haired, collie,* and *homeless.*]

So far so good. Now, suppose we try for a very different kind of word or phrase that will tell you something about *dog*. Something that's rather different from any of these words. I'll tell you what to do to get one of the other types. Think of a very short sentence with the word *dog* in it. Have you all got one?

Child: My dog is pleasant.

Mr. S: Very good. Now we have *my dog is pleasant.* Do you see a word telling us something about *dog* which is different from other words we have been using?

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*Edgar H. Schuster, *Grammar, Usage, and Style* (New York: Webster Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965).

This condensation was made by John J. Schreiber of the Bureau of Publications of a tape recording of Mr. Schuster's presentation to the Linguistic Workshop conducted by the Baltimore City Public Schools, August 8-26, 1966. Mr. Schuster retains the copyright on this material and has given the Bureau of Publications permission to print this condensation in the *Baltimore Bulletin of Education.*

C: My.
Mr. S: Exactly. How about another sentence like that?
C: The dog is friendly.
Mr. S: The dog is friendly. Okay. Doesn't *the* tell us something too? *The, my,* and we'll think of some others later on. Now, in addition to having words in front of the head word, it's also possible to have words telling you about the head word which go behind it, even though you don't have a sentence. Can you think of a word or group of words which can come behind *dog* and tell you something about *dog?*

How about *who belongs to me?* Okay? We could take a whole group of words — *who-belongs-to-me* — notice I'm putting hyphens in here. Why am I putting hyphens in there? Why do a weird thing like that?
C: For them to run together.
Mr. S: Well, why would I want them together?
C: It's a complete group.
Mr. S: Right. Sharp. It's a complete group; it functions as though it were a single word, don't you agree? Now, how about a simpler kind of group of words that would modify dog?
C: My dog is the biggest on the block.
Mr. S: On the block. I like that — *on-the-block.*
C: Of this kind.
Mr. S: Of-this-kind. Very good [As the pupils suggested the words, Mr. Schuster listed them in the columns indicated below.]

DOG

the	big	who-belongs-to-me
my	spotted	on-the-block
——	brown	of-this-kind
greyhound	homeless	
collie	fierce	
	short-haired	

Now, how many different kinds of words do we have here? Do you see any two words which are, in your opinion, pretty much the same kind of word?
C: Spotted and *brown.*
Mr. S: Spotted and *brown.* All right? Okay. Let's take out one of them. I'll erase the first one. Do you see any other words that are like *spotted* and *brown?*
C: Greyhound and *collie.*
Mr. S: Greyhound and *collie.* Well, they are like each other, right? So we'll erase one of them — *greyhound,* since it's longer.
Mr. S: Anything else?
C: I think *brown* and *big.*
Mr. S: Brown and *big,* very good. Any more? (Teacher erases *brown.*)
C: I think you could take out either *the* or *my.*
Mr. S: The or *my,* very good. You certainly can because they're the same kind of words somehow. [Mr. Schuster worked through the rest of the list until he had only the following words left: *collie, short-haired, fierce, who-belongs-to-me, on-the-block, big, the.*]

Now here's what I want you to do with a paper and pencil. I want you to take these words and arrange them around the word *dog* so as to have a good English phrase. Now just to make sure you give me a phrase and not a sentence, we'll take your sentence that ended with *is pleasant.* Does everybody understand what I want you to do? Simply arrange these words around *dog* in the way you normally would if you were going to write a good English sentence. Then complete your idea by saying *is pleasant.* Everyone can change *fierce* to *unfierce.* You might say, for example, *dog, collie, short-haired, unfierce, who-belongs-to-me, on-the-block, big, the, is pleasant,* but you wouldn't because you have learned a great deal about English grammar; you have learned a lot by imitation as a child. Let's see if you agree about the rules for arranging these words around the word *dog.* Go ahead and try. I want you all to have the same answer or almost the same answer. [Students worked and Mr. Schuster went about making an occasional suggestion.]

Now, what word's first on everybody's paper?
C: The.
Mr. S: The. Right. Is that an accident? Why didn't somebody put *the* someplace else? Are you all a bunch of conformists? Everybody has *the* first. What do you have in second position?
C: Big.
Mr. S: What do you have?
C: Big.
Mr. S: Who has something other than *big?* Everybody's got *big* in second position? You are conformists! All right, what do you have in third position?
C: Unfierce.

Mr. S: Unfierce. That's your third word? Does everybody have *unfierce* third? You have *short-haired?* Nobody's got anything else, I hope — just *unfierce* and *short-haired.* Now, what's next in line? *Collie. Collie* is next in, I assume, everybody's version. Next? *Dog.* Everybody's got *collie* and then *dog.*

How about *collie* and *unfierce dog?* Have you ever heard of *collie unfierce dog?* Or *collie big dog?* Isn't that interesting? Why shouldn't there be a *collie big dog?* You got any *feathered bright birds?* You could have a *pretty parakeet bird,* couldn't you? Could you have a *parakeet pretty bird?*

What's the next thing you've got? Everyone has *on-the-block* followed by *who-belongs to-me?* Then, of course, you complete the sentence.

Now, one of the major points here is that it's got to go the way we have it here. There are some exceptions; but, in general, everybody has *the* first and everybody has *collie* stuck to *dog.* It's got to stick to *dog.* You can't have any other word in between; not any of these words, at any rate. *Collie* must stick to *dog, on-the-block* has to follow *dog* and that has to be followed by *who-belongs-to-me.* There is a very definite order for most of these words. We have some disagreement about which goes first, *unfierce* or *short-haired.* Why?

C: Because they're the same type of word.

Mr. S: Does everyone agree? They're the same kind of word. We should have eliminated one of them. Let's take *short-haired* out.

Now how about *big* and *unfierce?* That's an interesting combination, isn't it? Suppose we took *un* off *fierce.* We could change the sentence to end with *nasty* instead of *pleasant.* We can say either the *fierce big dog* or the *big fierce dog,* can't we? We agree they must be pretty much the same kind of word, and so I'll take *fierce* out. Notice, by the way, that when you modify a head word like *dog,* the single word modifiers tend to precede the single word, whereas the word-group modifiers follow. That's a very natural thing in English. You find it all the time.

Let's get *fierce* out of here and in its place put *barking. The big barking collie dog.* Do you all agree with me that *barking* is another kind of word?

C: It's a different kind of word because *big* is a size and *barking* is what something does.

C: Barking is a form of verb.

Mr. S: Barking is a form of a verb — that's a good idea. What else tells you *barking* is a different kind of word from *big?* I'm thinking not so much about the meaning now as about other things; for example, the structure, the position. Can you change their positions? Could I say *the barking big collie dog* or does *the big barking collie dog* sound more natural? The last one sounds more natural. Well, these are just clues, ways of coming to the conclusion that *barking* may be a different kind of word from *big,* and I trust we would all say a different kind of word from *collie.*

All right, now, what I'd like you to do next is to come up with other words that are like these. I'd like you to come up with a list of words that belong in one of these particular columns. We won't make it a long list, but let's add at least a few to each column.

C: The could be *our, my.*

C: Collie could be *terrier* or *hound.*

C: Big could be *large.*

Mr. S: How about the *barking* column?

C: Sleeping, running.

Mr. S: Okay. Let me go back to the first column for a minute. I'm sort of interested in that first column. Can you think of other words that belong in there?

C: An.

Mr. S: An, very good. [Mr. Schuster continued to draw out words to make this list.]

the	big	barking	collie	dog
our	small	sleeping	terrier	
my	large	running	hound	
an				
that				
their				
this				
his				
those				
these				
your				
many				
several				
most				
three				

Mr. S: Three. That's good. You've got them all now. You've got all the different classes of words that can go in this first column, and you did it in about five minutes. Congratulations.

Each column represents a different kind of word. You agree that each column differs from the other. They all can modify a noun. I'm going to ask you something that you'll really have to think about. Try to give these words names. We know there are different kinds of words because of the fact that they fit in different slots, but there's another reason why they are different and that is that they tell us different kinds of things. In fact, the kinds of things they tell us may be one way of helping to name them. Who wants to volunteer a name for any one of the classes of words you have up here?

C: The *large* list could be called a physical description?

Mr. S: I kind of like that — descriptives. All right, let's take that as one possibility.

C: Types for the fourth column.

Mr. S: Types. Type or class you could say; it's the same thing.

C: Another one could be action words.

Mr. S: Any other ideas for names for one of the groups?

C: Well, the second one is adjective.

Mr. S: You could call the second column adjectives, right.

C: The third one could be verbs.

Mr. S: Would you call the words in the second column verbs?

C: No. Well, sometimes.

Mr. S: Could you say, "*I was smalling down the street larging my own business?*"

C: Aren't verbals formed from verbs?

Mr. S: Verbals are formed from verbs. Do you want to call this group verbals? Let's face it. You could call these words anything you please. You could call them smorgasbord and it wouldn't make any difference as long as everybody else in the world would agree to call them smorgasbord with you. But if you want to call them verbs, that would be great; if you want to call them verbals, I'll take that, too. Nobody's got me a word for the first column yet.

C: Limiting?

Mr. S: How about limiters? Now you've given me some ideas for naming these words and I like a lot of your ideas. I'm not going to insist on your calling any one of these columns any particular thing. But I do think we should name each column because the types are so different one from the other.

[The lists by now have all been given a heading.]

Limiters	*Descriptives-Adjectives*
the	big
. . .	. . .
three	large

Action Words-Verbs-Verbals	*Types-Classes*
barking	collie
. . .	. . .
running	hound

In your own grammar study in school, you may have called all these words adjectives. There's no harm in that, but do you see what is wrong with it in terms of this lesson?

C: Each word, even though they may be called adjectives, has a different effect on the word *dog* so that they all can't be classified actually as being the same.

Mr. S: If you put them all in the same bunch, you're obscuring those vital differences among them and that's the objection I would have in calling them all adjectives. Now, let's go on. Let's do something else.

Suppose we wanted to specify where this big barking collie dog is without using a group modifier like *in the yard*. Now we've got his type, we've got what he's doing, we've got some description on him, and we've got some limitations on him. I want to add one more thing. I want you to tell me something about where he is in one word. Think of one word that tells where this dog is and also decide where you would put it in this cluster of words. I see a dog walking down the lawn. I want you to give me a word which will describe his position in relation to you.

C: Here.

Mr. S: Here. That's perfect. How about something else?

C: Outside.

Mr. S: Good.

C: Nearby.

Mr. S: Nearby, inside. These are all words that tell us about the position of the dog. Now, where would they go in our cluster? *The big barking collie dog on the lawn belongs to me.*

C: The big barking collie dog outside.

Mr. S: You put *outside* after *dog*. Can you think of any other place where you might put *nearby* or *outside* or *here*? I think the natural place is the first place you came up with and that is right after the head word. Now these are the words that specify position or place. What else might you call them?

C: They point out where it is.

Mr. S: What do you want to call them — pointers? Pointers wouldn't be good, because there are too many other things you might call pointers, too.

C: Locators?

Mr. S: Locators, fine. Now you are exercising your own creativity again, which is great. Let me ask you for a moment to remember a grammatical word you probably have learned.

C: Adverbs.

Mr. S: Adverbs — what are adverbs doing modifying nouns? Isn't *dog* a noun? Anyway, that is a very interesting thought. What are adverbs doing modifying nouns?

Maybe that kind of word needs a little working on some other time.

To the workshop members this exhibition of teaching structural grammar was outstanding because of the artful questioning that drew from the class itself the materials the pupils were to use in making generalizations; the sure development of the concept of patterning, the structuralist's "filling a slot"; and the constant referral to the criterion of "what sounds right." They were also delighted at how effectively the teacher's enthusiastic reception of the pupils' suggestions established an atmosphere in which ideas could be generated.

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*Materials furnished to Workshop participants.

Linguistic Approaches to the Study of the American English Language

Phase I of the Baltimore City Public Schools Institute ran for five days a week (Monday through Friday) 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. from August 8 to August 26 inclusive. The daily schedule followed this division of time:

9:00-10:30 a.m.	Lecture
10:30-11:00 a.m.	Coffee, Browsing in Library
11:00-12:00 noon	Lecture
12:00- 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00- 2:00 p.m.	Discussions in Small Groups
2:00- 3:00 p.m.	General Session questions to consultant of the day

Charlton Laird

What Language Is

Theory of language: language process, structure and operation

History of the English Language

Origins and development of language; history and characteristics of the English language

Semantics

Theory of semantics: precision in use of words; ways in which words affect human behavior

English Grammar

Overview of comparative approaches to English grammar

Robert J. DiPietro

Structural Approach—phonology, morphology, syntax

Theory of structural linguistics: approach and objectives of the structuralist

Transformational Grammar

Theory of transformational linguistics: approach and objectives of the transformationalist

Roger W. Shuy

Dialectology

Theory, approach, and objectives of the linguistic geographer; relationship to pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary

Usage

Theory of linguistic usage: cultural levels and functional varieties of English; determining levels of usage

William A. Stewart

Linguistics and Speech

Applications to altering nonstandard speech patterns: establishing standards of usage; altering patterns of language; applying techniques of teaching foreign languages and of teaching English as a second language

Rosemary Wilson

Linguistics and Reading

Applications of linguistics to the teaching of reading

Edgar H. Schuster

Linguistics and Writing

Applications of linguistics to the teaching of writing

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